Lifestyle / C2

Art amid the rubble

Metro / A22

2nd public attorney ambushed, wounded

Infotech / B13

New viruses spreading via websites, instant messengers

Business / B2

DOTC wants LRT-1 expansion deferred due to fund lack

Tanong ng Bayan / A27

May saysay pa ba ang Edsa I?

CELLCARD KADA ARAW, CELLPHONE KADA LINGGO! Text 2910 now!

Bunye: Even US envoy ignoring travel advisory

BIYAHE NA TAYO!

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IGNORE the US state department's travel advisory just like the American ambassador does.

Press Secretary Ignacio

BUNYE/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Pinay entertainers try to beat Japan deadline

By TJ Burgonio

JUSTINE, an entertainer, can't wait to go back to Japan.

A week after flying home last month, she packed her bags and traveled for two hours to Manila to renew her certificate as a performing artist at the Philippine Overseas Employ-

PINAY/ A21

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Monday, February 21, 2005 ★★ 80 pages / 6 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 75 P18
website: www.inq7.net

Ex-solon in kidnap held

Blast witness an impostor, says officer

By Christian V. Esguerra

HAS THE Philippine National Police been taken for a ride in its investigation of the Makati blast on Valentine's Day?

Forty-eight hours after the PNP said it was closing in on three bombers, a senior police official branded as an "impostor and opportunist" the witness who supposedly identified the attackers and pinpointed their locations.

"He's bogus, a *hao siao* [a fake]," he told the INQUIRER, bursting with laughter, when asked for developments about the revelations of the male witness named in television reports only as "Francisco."

The officer asked not to be identified. He had in the past spoken on condition of anonymity in order not to put his organization in a bad light or create any impression of personality clashes within the PNP hierarchy.

The official said he and other officers reached the conclusion after lengthily interviewing the man, a tedious session which involved several members of the police intelligence community.

A background check on the purported witness also suggested that he was nothing but an "opportunist" who had at times approached investigators.

His "style" was to offer what he would say was juicy information in exchange for money, the PNP official said.

He said the man also surfaced during the investigation of the assassination of Senior Supt. Manolo Martinez last year.

"He also claimed that he knew something about the crime, who was behind it," the official said. "Someone was later arrested and it turned out that it was just a neighbor whom he didn't like."

Police have been quiet up to now on who Martinez's assassin was.

Even PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay seemed yesterday to distance himself

BLAST/ A21

ISLAMIC NEW YEAR MITCH MAURICIO

Filipino Muslims join the rest of the Islamic world in celebrating Ashoura, or New Year according to the Islamic lunar calendar, which falls on the 10th of Muharram. One of the most significant events in Islam, Ashoura has its spiritual and historical values and welcomes new and better changes for the coming year.

Cops save 3-year-old; 7 arrested

By Luige A. del Puerto and Christian V. Esguerra

ROLDAN: Actor-turned-politician on fresh spotlight.

FROM AN apartment in Cubao, Quezon City, neighbors could hear the cries of the boy: "*Iuwi n'yo na po ako* (Please bring me home)."

They had no idea that the child was a 3-year-old son of a Chinese-Filipino family who was abducted in Pasig City on Feb. 9 by three gunmen.

On Saturday night, 11 days after the abduction, the police antikidnapping unit rescued the boy from a couple hired to guard him.

Actor Dennis Roldan, a former congressman of Quezon City, was one of the seven suspects arrested in the operation, police announced yesterday. *(See related story on Page A7).*

One of the suspects pointed to Roldan as the alleged mastermind, Philippine National Police intelligence chief Director Robert Delfin said in an interview.

Roldan, 48, who had appeared in action movies and sometimes played villain roles, was a representative of Quezon City's third district from 1992 to 1995.

The kidnapped boy [name withheld as a matter of editorial policy] was playing with the couple's two children when rescued, according to anticrime advocate Teresita Ang-See.

Police said the kidnappers initially demanded P250 million in exchange for the boy's release. It was the first time in recent years that a kidnap gang had asked for such a huge ransom, PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay told the INQUIRER.

The first two months of this year has seen an upsurge of kid-

EX-SOLON/ A7

8 Iraq suicide bombers kill 55 on Shiite holiday

BAGHDAD, Iraq—Eight suicide bombers struck in quick succession in a wave of attacks that killed 55 people as Iraqi Shiites marched and lashed themselves with chains in ritual mourning of the 7th century death of a leader of their Muslim sect. Ninety-one people have been killed in violence in the past two days.

For the second year running, insurgent attacks shattered the commemoration of Ashoura, the holiest day of the Shiite religious calendar. But Saturday's violence produced a significantly smaller death toll than the 181 killed in twin bombings in Baghdad and the holy city of Karbala a year ago.

The dead this year included a US soldier who was killed in Baghdad when American troops responded to calls for assistance from Iraqi forces unable to cope with a slew of attacks.

With majority Shiites poised to take control of the country for the first time in modern Iraqi history, the interim government and Shiite politicians vowed the bloodshed would not cause the nation to spiral into civil war.

The suicide bombings were attempts "to create a religious war within Iraq. Iraqis will not allow this to happen, Iraqis will stand united as Iraqis foremost, and Iraq will not fall into sectarian war," Mouwaffaq al-Rubaie, the national security adviser for the interim government, told The Associated Press.

"The bombings on Shiite mosques and shrines on Ashoura by terrorists that call themselves Muslims are in fact actions by ter-

8 IRAQ/ A4

Bunye dispels fears of nat'l ID system

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Christine O. Avendaño and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SOME people might be spooked by President Macapagal-Arroyo's plan to implement a national identification system because they have something to hide like mistresses, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

"Probably those who are afraid of this (national ID system) are those with a lot of wives. Other 'relatives,'" Bunye said in a radio interview.

Bunye, also the President's spokesperson, who is known for his offbeat remarks and deadpan humor, later said he meant this as a joke. He said it was unlikely that the national ID system would disclose a person's amorous relationships.

He said the ID system's main aim was to expose individuals with "multiple addresses or those with something to hide."

The national ID system will require information such as the name of one's spouse or date of birth that is already disclosed in an individual's social security ID or driver's license.

By synchronizing all pertinent data about an individual in one ID that could be used in

BUNYE/ A8

THE ORIGINAL EDSA

Shrine sanctuary for RP artistry, talent

EDSA Shrine architect Francisco Mañosa. REM ZAMORA

By Charles E. Buban
Property

SINCE he began designing structures in the '60s, Francisco "Bobby" Mañosa has been on a quest—to develop and refine his vision of "contemporary Filipino architecture."

Such a quest has produced some of the finest architecture indeed, among them the Mary, Queen of Peace Shrine (more popularly known as the Edsa Shrine) in Mandaluyong City.

"When I was asked in 1986 to design a structure that would commemorate the historic [Edsa] revolt, I was already thinking of a

SHRINE/ A8

CHURCH at center symbolizes the Filipinos' faith and gratitude to God for achieving freedom. JOAN BONDOC

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon will have cloudy skies with rainshowers while the eastern sections of Visayas will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/21/04 SOURCE: PAGASA

Second FRONT PAGE

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Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Japanese execs buck VAT on power firms

By Carlito Pablo and Christine O. Avendaño

JAPANESE businessmen have also joined the clamor against the imposition of the value-added tax, particularly on independent power producers, warning that this would "drive away the future investors in the power industry."

The Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines, the umbrella organization of Japanese companies operating in the country, made known their strong objection to the lifting of the VAT exemption of IPPs in a letter early this month to then Trade Secretary and now Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima.

"The zero-rated VAT status of independent power producers that have power purchase agreements with (the) NPC (National Power Corp.) must be maintained," said chamber president Ryukichi Kawaguchi.

The reference to a zero-rated VAT status is a statement of the same guarantee made to IPPs in their contracts with the NPC.

Congress is seriously considering the lifting of the VAT exemptions enjoyed by IPPs, airline and shipping companies, and cooperatives to raise much-needed revenues for the government.

"In view of the policy consistency in the critical infrastructure development, we believe that the government should honor its commitment in accordance with the PPA so as not to drive away the future investors in the power industry," Kawaguchi said in a letter dated Feb. 4.

Former Speaker and now Rep. Noli Fuentebella (NPC, Camarines Sur), who has taken up the cudgels for IPPs, cited Kawaguchi's letter during floor deliberations of the House on Feb. 16.

Under a pending House bill, a 12-percent VAT will be imposed on IPPs, oil firms, doctors and lawyers, and on the purchase of oceangoing vessels.

Fuentebella said that based on the sentiment expressed by the Japanese chamber, the imposition of a tax on power "can send a wrong signal again to the investors."

"Some might not be interested or discouraged to further look at the Philippines as a good place for investment," Fuentebella said.

The imposition of a 12-percent VAT on IPPs is expected to generate an additional P26 billion in revenues for the government but Fuentebella warned that this will also increase electricity rates by 52 centavos per kilowatt-hour.

Fuentebella proposed that instead of taxing the IPPS, the NPC should be allowed to increase its rates by P1 per kWh.

"Whether we like it or not, you impose a VAT on power, you increase the electricity rate nonetheless," he said.

Meanwhile, senators dismissed Malacañang's warning of an Argentina-type debt crisis for the Philippines in two years if the government fails to raise much-needed revenues from tax measures, including the increase in the VAT rate.

"The Argentina bogey will not work on senators," Sen. Ralph Recto said in a statement. "The government should argue on facts, not on the fear factor."

Recto, who chairs the Senate ways and means committee, said the chamber "will proceed with caution on the VAT bills."

"We cannot rubber-stamp the approval of something that will cost taxpayers P275 billion in five years," he said.

The Senate was expected to start floor deliberations on the VAT proposal by Feb. 28 or after the House has approved a bill that seeks to lift VAT exemptions.

FORENSIC ASSISTANCE
An Australian Federal Police investigator takes photographs of evidence recovered from the Valentine's Day bombing in front of the Ecoland terminal in Davao City.

BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Gov't urged to probe root cause of Sulu fighting

By Carlito Pablo

THE GOVERNMENT is being urged to tap the Malaysian-led international monitoring team overseeing the ceasefire agreement between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in efforts to put a stop to the fighting raging in Sulu.

Rep. Faysah Dumarpa (Lakas, Lanao del Sur), chairperson of the House committee on social services, proposed the inclusion of the monitoring team in the fact-finding body that will probe into the real cause of the renewed conflict between government troops and armed rebels identified with Nur Misuari, former chair of the Moro National Liberation Front.

"We are calling on the government to cause an impartial investigation into the root cause of the fighting with the international monitoring team as member," Dumarpa said.

The 50-member team, which is led by Maj. Gen. Dato Sulkfeli bin Mohamad Zim, arrived in the country last October upon the mutual agreement of the government and MILF.

The team was later augmented by soldiers from Brunei.

Dumarpa said the participation of the monitoring team would ensure that the investigation will be fair and nonpartisan.

"Just as the government and MILF rely on the monitoring for an objective assessment of the ceasefire between them, the government can also depend on the team to help ferret out the causes of the conflict in Sulu," Dumarpa said.

Dumarpa pushed for an investigation into the Sulu conflict after Malacañang brushed aside calls for a ceasefire.

"In the greater interest of the people, both parties are called upon to mutually stop altogether the fighting. There are no victors in any war, only losers who are people," Dumarpa said.

Habir Malik, leader of the rebels battling government troops, earlier said that his forces were forced to attack due to abuses committed by soldiers.

Human rights top agenda of GMA, Burma PM talks

By Nikko Dizon

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo will raise the protection of human rights with Burmese Prime Minister Lt. Gen. Soe Win, who arrived late yesterday afternoon for an overnight official visit in Manila.

"One of the major topics scheduled for discussion by the two leaders is the promotion and protection of human rights," Malacañang said yesterday.

The issue was among the key principles of the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) which includes Burma (Myanmar) and the Philippines.

Burma's continued detention of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi has been an embarrassment for Asean which has nonetheless not confronted the internationally reviled regime, believing instead in "constructive engagement" in dealing with the military rulers in Yangon.

Last year, Ms Arroyo had called on Soe Win to allow Suu Kyi, a democracy icon, to be represented in government but stopped short in calling for her release.

Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party won elections in 1990, but the ruling military junta has refused to honor the victory. She is under house arrest in the Burmese capital Yangon.

Soe Win arrived with a 27-delegate party and was met by Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo, Environment Secretary Michael Defensor and Air Force chief Lt. Gen. Jose Reyes at the Villamor Air Base and was accorded the planeside honors given to visiting heads of state.

This is his first visit to Manila since assuming power last year. He is scheduled to leave for Vietnam today at around 3 p.m.

Activists against the Burmese regime have condemned the government for hosting the prime minister, pointing out how the country suffered under martial law during the Marcos dictatorship that ended in 1986.

"We don't support dictatorships," said Gus Miclat of the Initiatives for International Dialogue which has been pushing for the freedom of Suu Kyi.

"This commitment to democracy should reflect in our government's dealing with Burma. Please, let us not become the evil that we deplore," he said. *With AFP*

Bishops finally intervene in Luisita labor dispute

By Blanche S. Rivera

CATHOLIC bishops have taken the lead in reviving negotiations between striking farmers and the management of Hacienda Luisita, saying the labor dispute should be resolved by this month for the sake of the sugar industry.

Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla said the two parties will meet today in a last-ditch effort to end the labor conflict which has paralyzed the operations of the Central Azucarera de Tarlac and threatens to waste tons of sugarcane waiting to be milled in the azucarera.

Capalla said Pampanga Archbishop Paciano Aniceto and Tarlac Bishop Florentino Cinense would preside over the meeting, the third this month, between the union and management of Central Azucarera.

He said the parties have expressed their desire to end the dispute and enter into a compromise.

"They are trying to reach a compromise. They are caught in a dilemma because there are 73 workers in the hacienda and 35 in the Central Azucarera who were dismissed by DOLE (the Department of Labor and Employment)," Capalla said in an interview.

"It's not a problem of reinstating them as far as the two groups are concerned. But there is a problem over a reinstatement of them all," he said.

In a decision issued last month, the DOLE relieved 35 union officers of the Central Azucarera de Tarlac Labor Union (Catlu) for allegedly staging an illegal strike.

Another 73 workers from Hacienda Luisita, on the other hand, have pending cases with the National Labor Relations Commission regarding their dismissal from the hacienda.

Capalla said the management was willing to take in some of the Catlu's relieved officers but it could not afford to rehire all of them.

The management, however, has offered to employ in its future agricultural projects those who would not be reinstated.

"It is still being discussed. There may be people who will volunteer to stay out, but let the factories run again because... if they don't restore operations, the sugarcane will be of no use anymore," Capalla said.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines has resolved to help in the labor negotiations with the Cojuangco-owned Hacienda Luisita and Central Azucarera after its plenary last month.

Capalla and two other bishops even personally sought the President's assurance that there would be no violence on the part of the police and military that would be enforcing the DOLE's decision on the Central Azucarera.

PROTEKSYON NG MGA CAP PLANHOLDERS
BATAY SA PANUNTUNAN NG PAGSISIWALAT AT TRANSPARENCY

Inalam ng Consumer and Oil Price Watch (COPW) kasama si Party-list representative Loretta Rosales ang kalagayan ng mga 780,000 planholders para matiyak na pagdating ng bawat enrolment o pagpapatala sa mga eskwelahan, mayroon ang CAP ng sapat na pondo para bayaran ang tuition fees ng kanilang mga eskolar hanggang sila ay makapagtapos.

Ang COPW ay hihingi ng breakdown ng 700,000 eskolar na papasok sa eskwelahan mula 2005 at ang kabuuang taunang tuition fees ay ilagay sa isang trust bank na inaprobahan ng SEC para matiyak na hindi magamit ang pondo.

Pagkatapos na makapagbigay ng report ang COPW, si Party-list representative Rosales, na namumuno sa House Committee on Human Rights, ay maghaharap din ng hiwalay na konkretong sukatan para sa mas epektibong alituntunin ng mga pre-need firms na nakakaapekto sa sektor ng edukasyon.

MGA BALAK GAWIN NG COPW

Makikipagpulong kami sa mga grupong may kinalaman dito para malaman ang mga sumusunod na impormasyon:

- Mga listahan ng bankong tumatayong katiwala ng CAP at ang kanilang panuntunan kung paano ipamuhunan ang pondo.
- Kung ang trust funds ay lumihis sa policy of conservatism noong namuhunan sila sa mga proyekto ng MRT, Camp John Hay, at Fil Estate.
- Kung bakit ang mga MRT bonds na may maturity value na $1.00 ay ibinaba sa 30 sentimo, at noong inaalok ito ng mga sales agent ng CAP ay bumulusok sa 11 sentimo.

Ang COPW Chairman at si Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Chairman Fe Barin ay sang-ayon na bibigyan kami ng kopya ng $300 milyon na utang ng CAP sa First American Investment, Ltd., na ibinigay ng CAP sa SEC, pero hindi pa nailalabas ang pondo.

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Bicam tackles ₱907.6-B '05 budget this week

By Carlito Pablo and Christine O. Avendaño

THE BICAMERAL conference committee will start late this week discussions on the proposed P907.6-billion budget for 2005.

Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr. (LP, Camarines Sur), chair of the House appropriations committee, said the 2005 budget bill "features the strictest procurement guidelines in history."

To ensure transparency, priests and even bishops will now be allowed to sit in government bidding committees.

"This is the government's way of assuring the people that the higher taxes they will pay this year will be spent properly," said Andaya.

These stricter guidelines include:

- The expansion of the membership of bids and awards committees (BACs) in every government office to include a representative each from the Commission on Audit, a private group and a nongovernment organization which can be represented by the clergy;
- The adoption of a single price list for goods to be purchased by government starting from basic items like paper and ball pens;
- The blacklisting of projects like waiting sheds, welcome arches and basketball courts;
- The power given to COA to veto payment for contractors who deliver substandard projects;
- The ban on the purchase of new vehicles and going on foreign travels, except those funded by host countries, and
- The posting of project details on the website of the Department of Budget and Management after the award of contract and during its implementation.

Andaya said that "transparency" will be the operative principle in the pending appropriations bill.

"So a priest who rails against corruption can now do it within the confines of the BAC," Andaya explained.

Since the 2005 budget was not passed by Congress last December, the national government is currently operating under a technically reenacted budget for 2004.

The bicameral conference committee, composed of legislators from both houses of Congress, is tasked to reconcile the budget.

The Senate has already formed its seven-member panel but the House has not yet constituted its panel of congressmen.

Senators, who held morning and afternoon sessions to expedite the budget bill, had expected the bicameral conference committee to convene last week in order to finally approve the budget.

"I hope they [congressmen] are not sitting on it... and I hope the intention is not to have a reenacted budget for the third consecutive year," said opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara.

In a phone interview, Angara said that "normally" it would just take one session to form members of the bicameral conference committee.

"It's no great effort to constitute the committee," he said, adding though that he would still want to "give (the House) the benefit of the doubt."

Angara stressed that a third reenacted budget would be a "great cause for worry" because the consequence of a reenacted budget was that it would provide President Macapagal-Arroyo the power to juggle funds in the budget.

He explained the projects outlined in 2004 have either been completed or substantially completed that the money assigned for the 2004 budget could be now considered savings if the same budget is reenacted.

Angara warned that the public and the bureaucracy "would make a terrible outcry" against a reenacted budget.

Last week, Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. also wondered why the bicameral conference committee was still not meeting to discuss the final budget bill.

Both Pimentel and Angara said they were informed that the House panel had not yet been formed.

But Sen. Joker Arroyo did not see anything sinister about the development.

In a separate phone interview, Arroyo said he did not think Congress would allow the budget to be reenacted for the third time.

"Neither the Senate nor the House want a reenacted budget," Arroyo said, noting that Congress would be criticized for failing its duty.

Arroyo also pointed out that the House was busy the entire last week with floor deliberations on the proposal to remove the value-added tax exemptions of goods and services.

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Cogent db+ has undergone clinical evaluation by eminent endocrinologists and physicians from renowned medical institutions in India, Malaysia, China, Australia, Russia, and Sudan. A clinical trial by a team of medical scientists and physicians was recently published in the reputable United States medical periodical, *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine 2002; 8(4): 445-457*. In this study, sixty people between the ages of 30 to 70 who had Type 2 Diabetes were divided into two groups. For three months, one group took the conventional blood glucose-lowering medications plus the equivalent of 4 Cogent db+ tablets after each meal. The control group, on the other hand, only took conventional medicine. Test results showed that compared to the control group, those who took Cogent db+ had significantly lower fasting blood glucose, post-meal blood glucose, and insulin levels. Their total cholesterol, triglycerides, and HbA1c also improved. There was a significant control of proteinuria (presence of protein in the urine) and glycosuria (presence of glucose in the urine). None of the patients showed any toxicity while the severity of their Diabetes and general well being also improved substantially, proving that Cogent db+ is safe and effective.

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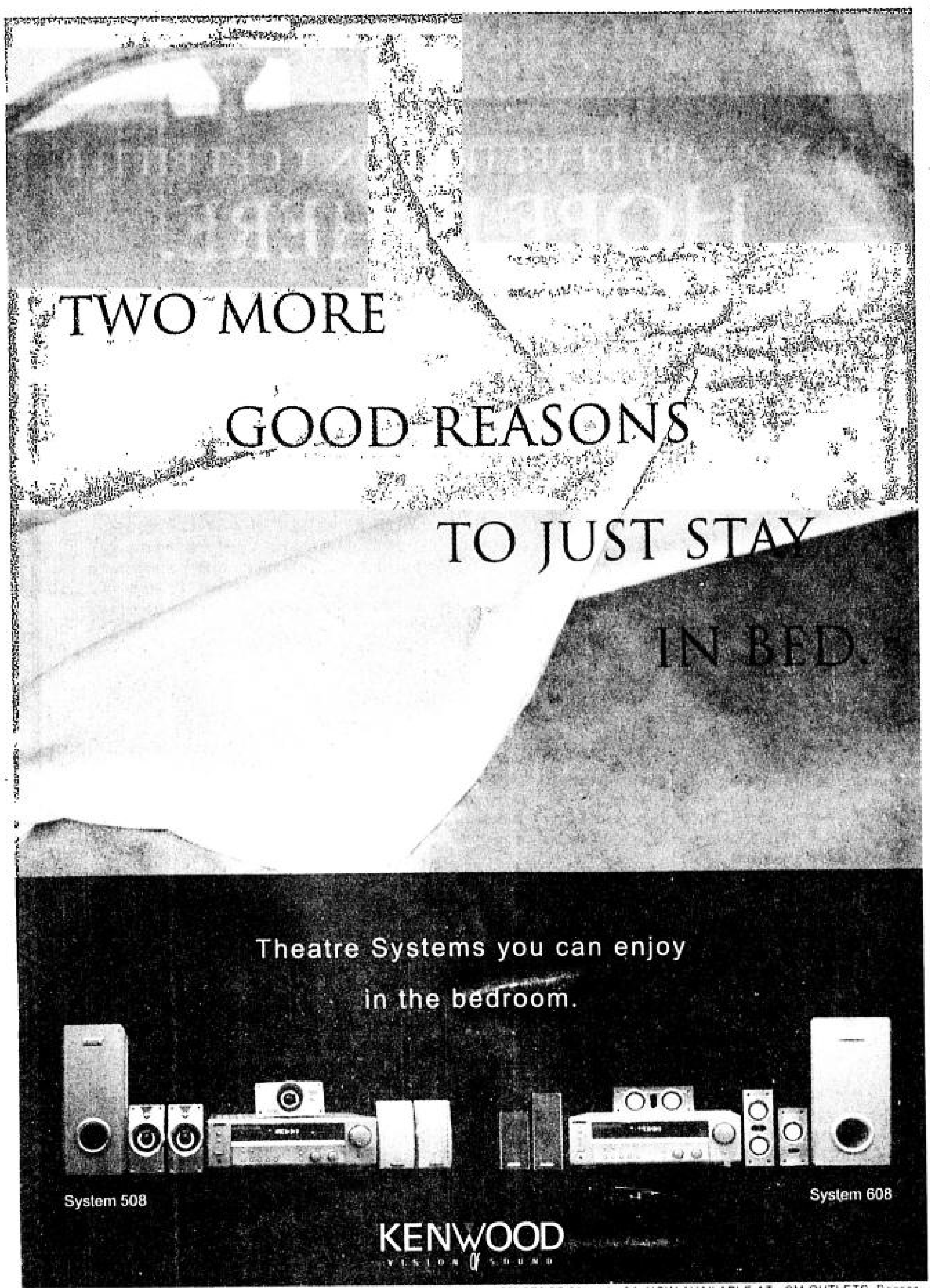

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		10:15-12:15pm	Trial & Pre-Trial Skills (2 CU)	Pre-Trial Skills: Civil & Criminal Cases	Justice Noel G. Tijam
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		3:15-6:15pm	Alternative Dispute Resolution (3 CU)	International & Domestic Arbitration	Dean Custodio O. Parlade
March 19, 2005	AM Session	8-10am	Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws (2 CU)	Updates in Civil & Criminal Procedure	Justice Ruben T. Reyes
		10:15-12:15pm	Alternative Dispute Resolution (2 CU)	ADR in the Workplace	Dean Froilan M. Bacungan
	PM Session	1-3pm	MCLE-Prescribed Subject: Technology and the Law (2 CU)	Essentials of Forensic Ballistics, Questioned Documents & Fingerprinting	Justice Regalado E. Maambong
		3:15-6:15pm	Legal Ethics (3 CU)	New Rules on Notarial Practice & Updates in Legal Ethics	Justice Hector L. Hofileña
April 2, 2005	AM Session	8-10am	Oral Advocacy & Legal Writing (2 CU)	Oral Advocacy	Justice Magdangal M. De Leon
		10:15-12:15pm	Trial & Pre-Trial Skills (2 CU)	Trial Technique: The Art of Direct & Cross Examination	Justice Edilberto G. Sandoval
	PM Session	1-3pm	Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws (2 CU)	Updates in Commercial Laws	Atty. Gafur E. Lutian
		3:15-6:15pm	Legal Ethics (3 CU)	The Lawyer's Pitfalls	Justice Hilarion L. Aquino
April 9, 2005	AM Session	8-10am	International Law (2 CU)	International Law & the Admission of Aliens	Atty. Ronaldo P. Ledesma
		10:15-12:15pm	MCLE-Prescribed Subject: Technology and the Law (2 CU)	Rules on Electronic Evidence	Atty. Ivan John E. Uy
	PM Session	1-3pm	MCLE-Prescribed Subject: Reforms in the Law (2 CU)	Reforms in the Dangerous Drugs Act	Justice Diosdado M. Peralta
		3:15-6:15pm	Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws (3 CU)	Updates in Constitutional & Election Laws	Justice Regalado E. Maambong
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US SOLDIERS inspect a bus devastated by a suicide bomber in a Shiite district of Baghdad. Five people were killed and 46 others were injured when a suicide bomber climbed onto the bus and detonated explosives. REUTERS

8 Iraq suicide bombers kill 55 on Shiite holiday

From page A1

rorists only attempting to spill even more Muslim blood by encouraging sectarian violence," he said.

Deadliest

The Saturday carnage was the deadliest of any day since last month's elections for a new national assembly in which the Shiite ticket, the United Iraqi Alliance, won 48 percent of the vote in Iraq's first democratic balloting. The alliance was expected to name its candidate for prime minister in the coming days. Forty-four people died in election-day violence.

As the violence ravaged the country, a five-member US congressional delegation, including Sen. Hillary Clinton, the New York Democrat, met with Iraqi government officials in Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone.

"The fact that you have these suicide bombers now, wreaking such hatred and violence while people pray, is to me, an indication of their failure," Clinton told reporters.

Bayan Jaber, a leading member of the Shiite Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), said the attacks had failed to create a divide between Shiites and the Sunni Arab minority. Shiites account for about 60 percent of Iraq's 26 million people. The Sunnis make up 20 percent of the population, but dominated politics under Saddam Hussein and previous governments after Iraq gained independence from Britain.

Jaber called the attackers a small faction of Sunnis "who are extremist Wahhabis who want to spark a civil war in Iraq."

But, he added, "a sectarian war will never occur in Iraq because Iraq is not like Afghanistan or Pakistan. We have tribal, marital, and historical relations with Sunnis and nothing will affect it."

Rapid buildup

The death toll built up rapidly on Saturday as the insurgents mounted attacks throughout the country employing suicide bombers—responsible for most deaths—mortar fire and gunmen, said Capt. Sabah Yassin, a defense ministry official.

One of the deadliest attacks was the work of a suicide car bomber at an Iraqi army checkpoint in Latifiya, 32 km south of the capital, killing nine Iraqi soldiers.

At least seven other bombers staged attacks in Baghdad and the region. Explosions reverberated in the capital throughout the day and into the night.

It was unclear which of the attacks in Baghdad claimed the life of the American soldier. A second soldier was wounded in the assault, which also killed an Iraqi.

Insurgents appeared to have struck at will in some areas despite stepped-up security that was prompted by last year's deadly Ashoura blasts. But in Karbala, the Shiite holy city 80 km south of Baghdad and site of one of last year's murderous explosions, no violence was reported on Saturday.

Hundreds of thousands people had gathered there to mark the holy day, which commemorates the death of the Imam Hussein, a grandson of the prophet Muhammad. Hussein was killed in a power struggle in 680 and is buried in a gold-domed shrine in Karbala.

Nearly all of Saturday's attacks inside Baghdad took place in the northern Azamiya and Kazimiya districts.

Assaults begin

The assaults began before noon, when a bomber walked into a tent outside a Sunni mosque in western Baghdad and blew himself up, killing at least three people and injuring 10. About 50 people were inside the tent attending a funeral.

It was unclear why the attacker struck the tent full of Sunnis outside the Fatah Pasha mosque, but similar structures were in place outside Shiite mosques for the Ashoura celebration. Most attacks by insurgents—who are thought to be predominantly Sunni extremists—are aimed at Shiites.

Next, a suicide bomber killed two Iraqi National Guardsmen also in the north, while another suicide attacker blew himself up on a public bus in Kazimiya, killing one child and six adults. Ten people were injured.

Police officer Rashid Haroun said another suicide bomber blew himself up close to the Nada Mosque in Kazimiya and seven Shiites, including three members of the national guard, were killed. That blast also injured 55 people, he said.

According to a police captain, two more suicide bombers died in the Kazimiya area, one who blew himself up in the Judges Institute—an academic institution—but killed no one, and another who was apparently shot dead by US troops.

In other attacks, a suicide bomber blew up a car outside an Iraqi National Guard base in Baqouba, killing three Iraqi guardsmen and wounding a fourth.

Six Iraqi guardsmen were killed in a mortar attack on the main highway between Baghdad and Hillah.

Gunmen holed up in a building in Baghdad opened fire on a funeral procession as mourners carried the coffins of some of the victims of a Friday bombing at the al-Khadimain mosque. Iraqi forces beat back that attack, capturing one of the assailants, said Sgt. Ali Hussein. No casualties were reported.

Yassin said eight other people were killed in unspecified insurgent violence in Baghdad and Mosul.

Arrests

Also Saturday, authorities reported arresting two insurgent leaders, including a top aide to Iraqi al-Qaida leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian-born terror mastermind.

Baqouba police chief Abdel Molan said his forces had captured Haidar Abu Bawari, also known as the "Prince of the Holy Warriors." He was described as a top aide to al-Zarqawi and the man behind the insurgency in the city, about 56 km northeast of the capital.

The Iraqi government also said it arrested one of the key insurgent leaders in the northern city of Mosul. He was identified as Harbi Abdul Khudair al-Mahmoudi, 50, also known as Abu Nor, a former member of Saddam Hussein's Baath party. *AP*

AQI workers remove the body of a victim near the wreckage of a bus. AFP

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ASIAN BEAUTIES
Miss Indonesia 2005 Imelda Fransisca (left) from Indonesia's West Java province poses with Miss Philippines Jhezarie Javier during the finals of Indonesia's beauty pageant held in Jakarta on Feb. 19. REUTERS

'Ligtas-Buntis' campaign kicks off today

By Blanche S. Rivera

AT LEAST 15,000 health workers will be deployed nationwide starting today to distribute some 1.6 million different contraceptive items as the Ligtas-Buntis 2005 campaign officially kicks off to promote family planning in the Philippines.

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit and Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte will lead the ceremonial launch at the Lumot covered court in Barangay Tatalon, Quezon City, one of the densely populated areas in Metro Manila.

The P100-million family planning campaign led by the Department of Health is seen as the first national campaign and the government's most aggressive initiative so far to encourage family planning among Filipino couples.

The government has allocated 1,425,596 cycles of oral pills, 130,910 intrauterine devices and 137,071 vials of injectable contraceptives for the campaign.

The contraceptives, mostly donations from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), are already in the DOH regional offices, Dr. Honorata Catibog, director of the DOH Family Planning Program, said.

The campaign will run until March 31, but the DOH expects local governments to follow through the program this year.

"This will be carried throughout the year. This is according to the government's four pillars of family planning. We are not doing anything wrong; we are not pro-abortionists. We just want to do what's right for the masses," Ethel Nieto, undersecretary for health operations, said in a phone interview yesterday.

The Mayors League of the Philippines, which sees the campaign as a move toward population management, will start a motorcade in Angono, Rizal, and in Bulacan on Wednesday.

The Ligtas-Buntis campaign was launched earlier in some cities. It started in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, on Feb. 14; Pampanga on Feb. 15, and Puerto Princesa, Palawan, on Feb. 16. Nieto said the health workers will be in Tarlac tomorrow.

A survey by the Social Weather Stations in December showed that only three out of 10 couples practice any form of family planning.

Some 2.9 million women have an unmet need for family planning. These are mostly women who wish to space childbirths or limit the number of their children but are not practicing any family planning methods.

The Ligtas-Buntis campaign would seek to identify that sector and address their need for family planning, whether through natural or artificial methods, Dayrit said.

The Arroyo administration, which has declared its preference for natural family planning, assured that contraceptives would be made available to couples who choose artificial methods.

Catibog said that buffer stocks left over from last year's donations were enough to meet the possible increase in demand for contraceptives due to Ligtas-Buntis.

While its partner organizations and local governments were allowed to give out condoms, the DOH remains firm on its stance against using condoms for family planning.

"We're promoting responsible parenthood. If we give away too many condoms, we would have taken away informed choice. They would have to use [the condoms]," Dr. Myrna Cabotaje, director of the DOH-National Center for Disease Prevention and Control, said in an earlier interview.

Gov't in no rush to lift deployment ban to Iraq

By TJ Burgonio

THE GOVERNMENT is in no hurry to lift the ban on the deployment of Filipino workers to Iraq since the situation in the Middle Eastern country remains volatile despite the success of the Jan. 30 Iraqi national elections.

"The violence continues. While elections have been held, the situation is not stable yet. Besides, the government is not in place yet," a foreign affairs official, who sought anonymity, said in an interview.

"That has not been discussed yet," added Jose Brillantes, undersecretary for migrant workers' affairs.

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo earlier said the government would review the ban, enforced in July last year in the aftermath of a Filipino truck driver's abduction, after the Iraqi polls, the first free elections since the downfall of Saddam Hussein.

In what was believed to be the bloodiest violence after last month's elections, a wave of suicide attacks hit several parts of the country on Friday, killing 36 people and wounding scores of others.

The Shiite religious coalition, which won 48.1 percent of the vote and gained 140 out of the National Assembly's 275 seats, is expected to dominate the new government.

So far, none among the estimated 6,000 Filipinos working inside United States military camps as well as the more than 100 others working outside were reported hurt in the attacks, which continued to batter the violence-wracked country.

"They're safe. We have no reports of casualties on the part of the workers. There's no bad news coming from our embassy in Baghdad," the official said.

Meanwhile, a lean team of officials manning the embassy in Baghdad, led by Undersecretary Rafael Seguis, continues negotiations to win the freedom of hostage Robert Tarongoy, who was abducted more than three months ago.

Joint RP-US antiterror military exercises begin

By Christian V. Esguerra

SOME 650 Filipino soldiers and 300 American troops on Sunday began joint military exercises aimed at improving cooperation against terrorism and other attacks.

The two-week Balikatan 2005 military exercises, which will end on March 6, are to be held in military camps in Luzon.

The maneuvers are aimed at improving joint planning and enhancing capabilities "against armed attacks, including threats from terrorist groups, as well as readiness to respond to natural disasters," the United States Embassy said.

Part of the program are sessions on troop readiness to respond to natural disasters, the embassy added.

There will also be civic actions such as medical, dental, veterinary and engineering projects in the training package.

The training on antiterrorism security measures was quite timely after the US State Department warned Americans in the country to remain on high alert due to possible attacks.

"Terrorist groups do not distinguish between official and civilian targets," the US department said in its Friday advisory.

The warning was issued in the triple Valentine's Day bomb attacks that killed at least eight people and wounded 150 others in the cities of Makati, Davao and General Santos. The Abu Sayyaf claimed responsibility for the bombings.

The Moro extremist group managed to carry out the attacks despite tight security measures then in place, especially in Metro Manila.

The Philippine National Police had admitted it had known of the planned attacks as early as December last year.

The Philippines is a US ally in its global war on terrorism, and small numbers of US military advisers have been helping the government crush the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group. *With a report from AFP*

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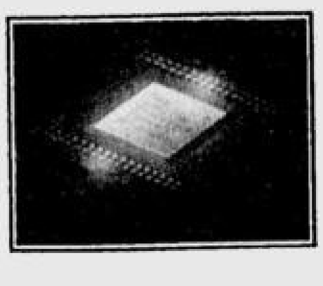

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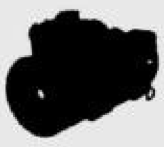

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Harsh gov't responses risk increased terror, say analysts

KUALA LUMPUR—Harsh government responses to Muslim separatist violence in Thailand and the Philippines risk drawing international terrorists more deeply into the region, analysts say.

Conflicts in Muslim areas of Buddhist Thailand and the mainly Christian Philippines have been fueled by local issues but are getting increasing attention from Islamic militants outside the region, they say.

Arab websites supporting Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network have begun "highlighting the Thai issue," said Rohan Gunaratna, a terrorism expert with Singapore's Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies.

"Prologation of this conflict will mean greater involvement of other regional groups and global groups like al-Qaida."

The southern Philippines, where separatist conflicts have raged for decades, already has a "permanent al-Qaida presence," Gunaratna told Agence France Presse.

Increasing foreign involvement, particularly in Thailand, is "certainly a risk," said Robert Broadfoot of the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Consultancy.

"The grievances in southern Thailand are local but as we saw in Indonesia and the Philippines, al-Qaida and international groups have been able to take advantage of those local situations.

"Their scope has broadened beyond strictly domestic issues to where they are commenting on United States policy in Iraq and international issues."

RP-Thai effort

Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and President Macapagal-Arroyo both pledged tough action against separatists in the wake of bomb attacks last week which killed a total of 16 people and wounded nearly 200.

Ten were killed in three blasts in the Philippines and six in the deadliest single bombing in Thailand's Muslim-dominated deep south, where separatist violence has claimed about 600 lives in the past 13 months.

Ms Arroyo vowed to crush the rebel group Abu Sayyaf, which claimed the Valentine's Day bombings and is said by the United States to have al-Qaida links, but added: "The government shall focus its operations against terrorist cells and there should be no fear of a witch hunt."

Thaksin, however, has unveiled a plan to cut state funds to villages deemed supportive of southern separatists.

With Muslims already complaining of political and economic marginalization, critics say the new plan will simply make things worse.

Increased Muslim suffering could make southern Thailand a fertile area for exploitation by al-Qaida militants, Gunaratna said.

"We saw on Jan. 5 an Arab website for the first time carrying images of the Tak Bai incident" in which 87 Muslim demonstrators died, most of them through suffocation after being piled onto the backs of army trucks.

"And we are seeing Arab pro-al-Qaida websites are highlighting the Thai issue, so certainly it is in the long term strategic and national interest of Thailand to resolve this problem as soon as possible."

Thaksin has charged that militants seek refuge across the border in mainly Muslim Malaysia and even train in the jungles in the north of that country, accusations which have led to sharp exchanges with Kuala Lumpur.

Instead of antagonizing Malaysia, Gunaratna said Thailand should seek a special relationship with its Muslim neighbor, establishing common data bases on militants, setting up joint training and operations and sharing resources and experience.

"We are seeing that the operational leaders and the spiritual leaders are shuttling through the porous border between Malaysia and Thailand but we do not see any Malaysian government support for these groups," Gunaratna said.

Broadfoot pointed out that "the Malaysian government has at least as much interest as Thaksin does in not having this get out of hand."

AFP

Bunye: Even US envoy . . .

From page A1

Bunye gave this advice to prospective American tourists after the United States warned against terrorist attacks on airports, passenger ships and seaports in the country.

The state department urged Americans traveling or residing in the Philippines to exercise caution and maintain heightened security awareness because its embassy continued to receive reports of ongoing activities by terrorist groups.

It issued the warning on Friday following the Valentine's Day bombings in the cities of Makati, Davao and General Santos that killed eight people and wounded about 150 others. The Abu Sayyaf, which is linked to the Southeast Asian terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah, has taken responsibility for the bombings.

"This assessment is an overkill or overreaction. Their own officials are here and we see them mixing easily with society. They go about their normal business and private activities," Bunye said in an interview aired over RMN radio.

Bunye noted that US Ambassador to the Philippines Francis Ricciardone even brought in some friends and relatives to spend the Christmas holiday in the Philippines.

"The bottom line is there are only a few tourists who follow their home country's travel advisories. Ambassador Ricciardone even said, 'Don't mind those advisories,'" said Bunye, who expects tourism arrivals to increase this year.

US ambassador in Cotabato

Despite the reported threats of more bombings, Ricciardone and local officials inaugurated the other day a bridge that the US government was funding in a former rebel stronghold in Maguindanao.

Officials said the construction of the P11-million bridge in Barangay Sarmiento, formerly Camp Abubakar of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), was covered by the Growth for Equity in Mindanao, a program funded by the US Agency for International Development.

Ricciardone also visited a corn shelling facility and witnessed the turnover of personal computer units to an Islamic school, both in Cotabato City. Both are US-funded projects.

"What is important is to have tighter cooperation between the citizens and the police and local government authorities to guard the peace. But we should go about our normal activities," Bunye said.

Compare notes

Bunye said the United States should "compare notes" with the Philippines. "We have an arrangement for intelligence sharing," he said.

Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes asked the public not to be cowed by the state department's advisory.

"Go on living your normal lives. Don't be terrorized," Reyes said.

He asked the public to "be alert and provide information [to authorities]" even as he claimed that "all intelligence agencies and law enforcement agencies are working."

Director Avelino Razon Jr., National Capital Region Police Office head, told reporters that his men had four additional sketches of those involved in the Makati City bombing.

He said the suspects were still in Metro Manila.

"We are racing against time. The longer the delay, the greater the risk of compromising the operation," Razon said.

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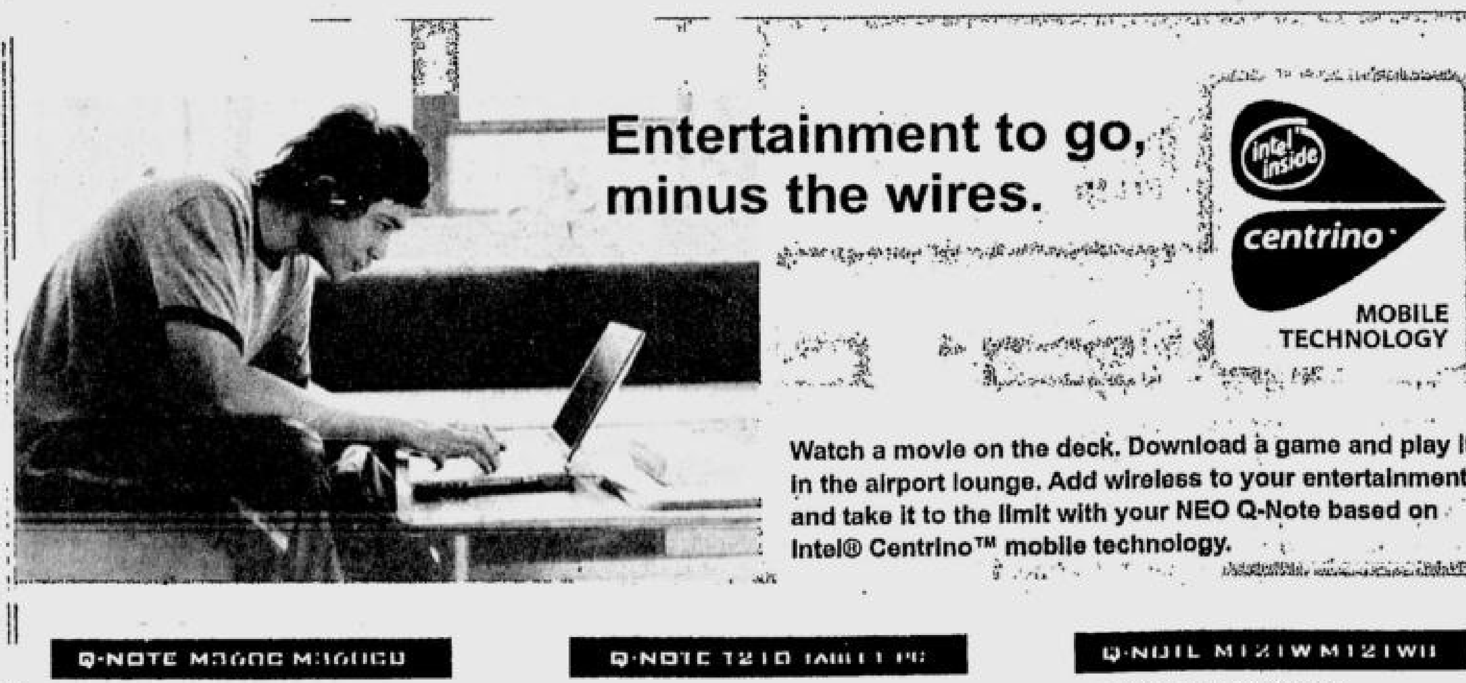

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, February 21, 2005
2nd Week of Lent

1st Reading: Dan 9:4-10
Gospel: Luke 6:36-38

Jesus said to his disciples, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

"Don't be a judge of others and you will not be judged; do not condemn and you will not be condemned; forgive and you will be forgiven; give and it will be given to you, and you will receive in your sack good measure, pressed down, full and running over. For the measure you give will be the measure you receive back."

Commentary

Daniel's prayer must be our own, as sinners before God the Holy One, asking mercy, knowing how greatly we all need it because of our disobedience of the law and our ignoring the cries of the prophets. We have rebelled against our God and our infidelities have created a world and a nation that is scattered, without unity, hope or a way to worship with integrity. We must learn to practice the mercy of God towards others that we have known all our lives. The measure we give: in judgment, in condemning others and in forgiving others as well as in giving generously to others is the measure we will know from the hand of Our Father. O Holy One of God, make us mindful of God's mercy upon us, keeping us from death and make us respond to others with mercy, without revenge, without violence, without hate and with forgiveness. O God, be merciful to us, your children who are sinners. Amen.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (CIVIL PROCEDURE)—Petition for certiorari—For a petition for certiorari to be granted, it must set out and demonstrate, plainly and distinctly, all the facts essential to establish a right to a writ. The petitioners must allege in their petition and establish facts to show that any other existing remedy is not speedy or adequate and that (a) the writ is directed against a tribunal, board or officer exercising judicial or quasi-judicial functions; (b) such tribunal, board or officer has acted without or in excess of jurisdiction, or with grave abuse of discretion amounting to excess or lack of jurisdiction; and, (c) there is no appeal or any plain, speedy and adequate remedy in the ordinary course of law. The public respondent acts without jurisdiction if it does not have the legal power to determine the case; there is excess of jurisdiction where the respondent, being clothed with the power to determine the case, oversteps its authority as determined by law. There is grave abuse of discretion where the public respondent acts in a capricious, whimsical, arbitrary or despotic manner in the exercise of its judgment as to be said to be equivalent to lack of jurisdiction. Mere abuse of discretion is not enough. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Callejo, Sr., Second Division, Corpuz vs Sandiganbayan, G. R. No. 162214, November 11, 2004]

BY R. B. VERA

Ex-solon in kidnap held

From page A1

nappings—five cases in just six weeks, said the Citizens Action Against Crime, an anti-crime watchdog Ang-See heads.

"This year has been really bad," Ang-See said. "From a low last year, it seems kidnappers are hungry, thirsty this year."

At one point during the haggling over a lowered ransom demand, the kidnappers told the boy's family that "they had killed him, and that it was too late," Ang-See told the INQUIRER.

The boy's mother, on hearing it, fainted.

Delfin said the initial demand even reached a high of P270 million.

Poor homework

"But they didn't do their homework," Ang-See said. "What they apparently didn't know was that the mother's father died last year [but that] based on Chinese customs, she could not get any inheritance."

Chinese women usually do not inherit the wealth of their parents, she said. It is the men who do.

"So that meant she could not afford the ransom," she added.

The kidnappers soon found out about this and reduced their demand to P50 million, then to P10 million, then P5 million and finally, P3 million.

Still, the family, which was into the plastics business, could not afford it.

"They already sold cars, but still they could not raise the amount," Ang-See said. "The kidnappers really overestimated the family's wealth."

At this point, she said the boy's family had no other choice but to seek assistance from the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response (Pacer), the main PNP antikidnapping unit.

Amateur group?

A Pacer team placed Roldan and company under surveillance before arresting them in a series of operations, Delfin said.

Throughout the boy's ordeal, his family was given no proof that he was still alive, police said.

Delfin said the way the kidnappers handled the kidnapping drama suggested that the group was new in the business.

For one, they didn't do a complete background check on their victim and his family's financial background, police said.

Ang-See said that it was during the haggling over the lowered demand that the kidnappers said they had already killed the boy.

"It was very traumatic for the family," she said.

Ang-See said that by then, the antikidnapping unit had been able to trace the boy.

"The mother had already fainted ... She could not anymore answer the phone," Ang-See said. "So they consented (to a rescue effort). They could not stand it anymore."

"This is a very sadistic group," Ang-See said.

Number's up

Delfin said that throughout the negotiation, Pacer operatives were trailing Roldan and his group.

On Saturday, they caught the group at an apartment at 107-E Harvard St., Cubao, between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m., Delfin said.

Among the first to be arrested was Albert Pagdanganan (alias Vincent Tuazon), he said.

A certain Adrian Carlos Domingo, alias Choy, was later arrested in Calumpit, Bulacan, he added.

During interrogation, Albert tagged Roldan as the group's alleged mastermind, Delfin said, adding that Roldan later linked a certain Garces, a Quezon City barangay chair, in the abduction.

Investigators were still looking for a certain Suzette, Roldan's alleged girlfriend, who purportedly chose the boy as the target, Delfin said.

Too young to understand

Suzette is allegedly a friend of the boy's mother.

The child was asleep when he was handed over to his parents shortly after he was rescued.

"The family is very grateful ... They did not know if they could last another week," Ang-See said on the phone.

Quoting the boy's parents, she said the child seemed to have no sign of trauma. "Perhaps he is too young to understand it all," she said.

Penalty is death

Ang-See said the boy's rescue should serve as a warning to kidnappers.

"You really have to find another job," she said. "This is death penalty."

The police announcement said three men seized the boy at about 9 a.m. on Feb. 9 in front of Chef and Brewer Cafe and Restaurant on Sapphire Road and Emerald Avenue in Pasig.

They took off in a waiting white Honda CRV van and sped off.

A witness said that before he was abducted, the boy was clinging onto his *yaya's* (maid's) hands on their way to his preschool.

Maid overpowered

When they reached the street corner, the CRV suddenly screeched to a halt near them.

The witness said at least one person got out of the car but that actually two men, with handguns, snatched the boy.

He said the maid wrestled for control of the child, but was overpowered.

On the same day, at about 9:30 p.m., the victim's family received a telephone call from a male caller, who introduced himself as Mang Ed, and demanded ransom.

Fearing for the boy's life, his family initially did not want to cooperate with the police, an officer said.

An investigator said the CRV and its occupants had been seen just a few blocks away from the kidnapping scene three days before the abduction.

"When asked by a guard what they were doing there, they said they were contractors. There is a fast-food chain being constructed nearby," the investigator said.

Cars switched

He said the abductors, who were last seen heading toward Robinson's Galleria, could have switched cars in any of the parking areas of buildings in the area.

The Pacer seized at least three vehicles in the operation against the kidnap group—a Mitsubishi L-300 van (TEP-816), a green Mitsubishi Pajero and a Nissan (GJF-455).

Actor arrested, not abducted, say cops

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SHE CAME to the police yesterday morning to report that her husband had been abducted from their house by gunmen.

In the afternoon, police clarified matters.

No, Maria Theresa Gumabao's husband, was not kidnapped.

The husband, Mitchell Gumabao—also popularly known by his movie name of Dennis Roldan and a former member of Congress—had, in fact, been arrested on suspicion of involvement with a kidnap-for-ransom gang.

The gunmen who broke into Gumabao's house were not robbers or kidnappers but actually government agents, police said.

Gumabao, 47, told the Batasan Hills Police Station she and her family were sleeping inside their house when, at about 5:50 a.m., more than 20 armed men barged in, destroying the main door.

The men dragged Roldan outside the house and took him away, the wife reported.

She alleged that the gunmen also carted away their light blue Toyota Corolla, their cell phones and jewelry, including a Rolex watch she said was worth P500,000.

It was only later that police said that the "abduction" was actually an authorized police operation.

Central Police District director Nicasio Radovan told the INQUIRER the operation was legitimate.

The seven suspects detained by the police for alleged involvement in the kidnapping of a 3-year-old boy:

- Mitchell Gumabao y Yap alias Dennis Roldan, 48 years old, married, businessman, former congressman of 3rd district, Quezon City and a resident of No. 1 Dodge St., corner Ortiz St., Filinvest II, Quezon City;
- Romeo Orcajada y Blazo alias Bobby, 43 years old, married, jeepney driver, of Barangay Bagong Silangan, Payatas, Quezon City;
- Rowena Prado y San Andres alias Weng, 27 years old, married, of Barangay Petenis, Payatas, Quezon City;
- Noel San Andres y Cadahing alias Manolo/Noel, 38 years old, married, driver and a resident of Barangay Petenis, Payatas, Quezon City;
- Octavio Garces y Pacis, 50 years old, married, Barangay chair of East Kamias, Quezon City;
- Alberto Pagdanganan y Naguit alias Vincent Tuazon, 37 years old, married, businessman and a resident of Purok 5, Zone 5, Kapalaran, Apalit, Pampanga;
- Adrian Domingo y Carlos alias Choy, 27 years old, married, painter of Zone 5, Kapalaran, Apalit, Pampanga.

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5. Travel of award tickets for this promo must be completed on or before March 15, 2005.
6. Rerouting is not allowed. Rebooking is subject to a deduction of 150 PremiuMiles or PhP100 charge.
7. Processed requests may not be cancelled and recredited to a member's account.
8. For inquiries on how to redeem the award tickets, Summit Club members can call the toll-free number 1-800-1888-25-82 or 02-638-1746 for Manila.

Award Ticket Redemption Chart for Promo Period

ROUTE (vice-versa)	ONE-WAY	ROUND TRIP	ROUND TRIP (Companion)
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Manila - Zamboanga	3,250	6,000	5,000
Manila - Cagayan	3,250	6,000	5,000
Manila - Butuan	3,250	6,000	5,000
Manila - Dumaguete	2,250	4,000	3,500
Manila - Tagbilaran	2,250	4,000	3,500
Manila - Puerto Princesa	2,250	4,000	3,500
Manila - Cebu	2,250	4,000	3,500
Manila - Tacloban	2,250	4,000	3,500
Cebu - Puerto Princesa	2,250	4,000	3,500
Manila - Bacolod	1,750	3,000	2,500
Manila - Iloilo	1,750	3,000	2,500
Cebu - Zamboanga	1,750	3,000	2,500
Manila - Roxas	1,750	3,000	2,500
Manila - Kalibo	1,750	3,000	2,500
Cebu - Davao	1,750	3,000	2,500
Cebu - Butuan	1,750	3,000	2,500
Iloilo - Cebu	1,750	3,000	2,500
Cebu - Bacolod	1,750	3,000	2,500
Davao - Zamboanga	1,750	3,000	2,500

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Bunye dispels fears of national ID system

From page A1

official transactions, such as job or loan applications, the government could pick out terrorists hiding behind the public's cloak, stop "flying voters" and make wallets less bulky, Bunye said.

"So, what's so bad about that?" Bunye asked critics of the national ID system, including the President's allies in the Senate.

Senators Joker Arroyo and Francis Pangilinan are among those against the proposed national ID system.

Unconstitutional

Arroyo, who earlier warned that the system was an invitation for human rights violation, said it should not be made compulsory.

Pangilinan said the Supreme Court had already ruled as unconstitutional an administrative order issued by then President Fidel Ramos seeking to impose a national ID system in the country.

In a statement, he said any proposal seeking to have a similar ID system "has the real possibility of being invalidated again by the Supreme Court."

"Under the law, the 'clear and present danger rule,' the state has the right to prevent the use of measures or policies when these create a clear and present danger that will bring about substantive evils," Pangilinan said.

"In using this principle, the Supreme Court recognized that the rights enshrined in the Bill of Rights of our Constitution may most likely be trampled [upon] by this national ID system."

Pangilinan said "there needs to be more justification for the national ID system than what is being presented at the moment."

"If there is more effective intelligence work, we can be more effective in fighting the war on terror, without infringing on basic human rights of the innocent majority," he said.

A member of the House of Representatives is proposing a barangay ID instead of a national ID.

"The national ID system will create false hopes [that it will be the] solution to terrorism," Taguig City Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano told reporters.

He noted that the Bureau of Internal Revenue had been computerized but it failed to track down corrupt taxpayers. "Why don't we have a barangay ID system?" he asked.

After each barangay had implemented an ID system, they could be linked using a computer system, he said. "Barangay captains know their own residents better," Cayetano said.

Like 'cedula'

The Communist Party of the Philippines is also against a national ID system, calling it a "fascist tool to suppress the people and curtail civil rights."

CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal said "the militarist Arroyo regime will use the proposed national ID system to suppress opposition to the regime and stifle resistance to its anti-people and pro-imperialist policies."

Rosal compared the proposed national ID system with the "*cedula*" during the Spanish colonial period, which was used to control people's movements and suppress resistance to colonialism.

"This is an instrument of a martial law regime," he said.

Rosal condemned the Arroyo administration for using the Feb. 14 bombings as pretext for pushing fascist policies.

Pilot test areas

But Bunye said the ID system would not be an invasion of privacy.

"I just don't see how this can be an invasion of privacy when it only requires the standard information that you give when applying for a job—date of birth, mother's name, father's name and schools attended," Bunye said.

He said the government would not manipulate information in a person's ID. "How can we put wrong information in that ID? All information to be encoded will be based on information that you yourself filled up."

While Congress has yet to agree on whether to tackle the antiterror bill and the ID system, Bunye said the ID project would be "pilot-tested" in Metro Manila and the provinces.

In Binalonan, Pangasinan, the President said on Saturday that the country's mayors had already agreed to support the national ID system.

She said the mayors would lead in pushing for the passage of ordinances in their towns to implement local ID systems while debates on the national ID system were going on.

Her cousin, Binalonan Mayor Ramon Guico, president of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines, said that the LMP had endorsed the national ID system as early as 2002, and that some towns had already instituted local ID systems.

Guico said LMP officials would discuss the viability of the national ID system when they meet on Feb. 28.

Bugging of phones

The Senate opposition bloc is willing to support a bill aimed at fighting terrorism but on the condition that civil liberties are "not sacrificed on the altar of national security."

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said yesterday it was necessary to make sure that the constitutional rights of the people were not trampled upon.

In a statement, Pimentel acknowledged an antiterrorism bill was "needed by the times."

But he noted that senators from the majority and minority blocs would cast their votes for an antiterrorism measure based on the following:

- It should not legitimize the bugging of telephones, the monitoring of e-mails, or the reading of correspondences without court order.
- It should not surreptitiously open bank accounts without court order.
- It should not legalize the long-term indefinite detention by law enforcers of suspected terrorists for investigation.
- It should not legalize the sending of arrested suspected terrorists, if they are Filipino citizens, to another country for investigation purposes unless covered by extradition treaties.

Supporters in Senate

More senators yesterday came out to signify their support for a national ID system.

Senators Edgardo Angara, Manuel Villar Jr. and Ralph Recto joined four other colleagues—Senate President Franklin Drilon, Panfilo Lacson, Juan Ponce Enrile and Ramon Magsaysay Jr. in agreeing to the adoption of a national ID system in the country.

Malacañang has urged Congress to pass a law implementing a national ID system, but Drilon said the Palace could just issue an executive order to put the system into effect.

Angara supports a legislative measure so that the system can be implemented, saying that the Senate should revive the report of his then committee on constitutional amendments in the last Congress that proposed the adoption of a national ID system.

"The draft report incorporates all the concerns of all agencies and human rights groups," Angara said in a phone interview. He had conducted several public hearings on the subject.

Basically, he said an "all-purpose ID" would be beneficial to citizens. "One ID can be used for social security, employment and immigration purposes," he said.

He acknowledged though the concerns raised by groups that such a system would be abused by law enforcers. But he said measures could be adopted so that the system would not be used for harassing people or violating their rights.

Villar, for his part, said he initially was opposed to a national ID system as it might be used to invade people's privacy. "But I found out that many countries do have a national ID system," he said in a statement.

Makati's yellow card

Now, he said the proposal was not a bad idea. "This will pave the way for easy identification of foreigners and easy access to the background of our citizens," he added.

Recto told authorities to look into the "yellow card" program in Makati City "for a prototype of a national ID card that would become so well-loved that people will not leave home without it."

Recto said he was for the "gradual evolution of the PhilHealth card into the national ID card."

In a statement, Recto said that the Philhealth card was bestowed the status of a national ID card when a 1995 law required its issuance to all Filipinos. Using the Philhealth card was much cheaper and the government would be hitting two birds with one stone, according to the senator.

In Baguio City, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz said Saturday that the Palace was pushing for a national ID system as a certified administrative bill that could complement or form part of Sen. Panfilo Lacson's antiterrorism measure.

Cruz said a Malacañang technical working group had drawn up the bill's first draft, which now includes suggestions offered by critics. *With reports from Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Vincent Cabreza and Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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MMEMORATION &
MUSLIM PUBLIC CEMETERY
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ABS CBN

SHEDDING its old image of being a place for crime and shady characters, the Muslim public cemetery will undergo a clean and green rehabilitation as announced by Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes and National Capital Region Police Office Director Avelino Razon. The program was launched during the Islamic celebration of Ashoura.

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Shrine sanctuary ...

From page A1

church," recalled Mañosa.

"No other structure can symbolize our faith and gratitude to the Almighty who helped us achieve the freedom we now enjoy because of Edsa I," he said.

Mañosa's original plan was to construct a towering cathedral. However, he had to revise his design.

"The reasons were simple," he recalled. "I had to keep construction costs to a minimum since the project relied mostly on donations. I would be working on a small piece of property (a 3,000-square-meter corner lot donated by the families of Don Paco Ortigas and John Gokongwei), and I also had to consider future traffic flow and parking."

Despite the limitations, Mañosa adeptly conveyed his architectural style, calling on his years of designing residences and institutions all over the country.

However, he refused to compare the Edsa Shrine with other churches and chapels he had designed.

"I think that a church should not be compared with another. Each has its own rationale and beginning," said the architect, who designed the Risen Lord Parish, the St. Joseph Church in Las Piñas City and the Assumption College Chapel in Makati City.

Place to meet

The whole Edsa Shrine concept was influenced by church plazas, an idea which came from then Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin, said Mañosa.

"In most provinces, the church plaza is a place where people congregate, hold meetings or simply meet before going to or after Mass. This is what we have created at the Edsa Shrine," he explained.

The plaza is flanked on both sides by wide staircases intersected by handicap access ramps. They lead to the hexagonal structure (this shape is generally employed to maximize usable space) where the towering bronze statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary stands.

The second level of the plaza also serves as stage for the annual programs that commemorate the two Edsa revolutions.

Inside the church

Like in all of his works, Mañosa incorporated design, forms drawn from traditional architecture [represented by the *bahay kubo* (nipa hut) and the *bahay na bato* (stone house)] and used local materials such as granite—quarried from the Ilocos region—to line the Edsa Shrine's perimeters.

Capiz shells and Philippine hardwood were also used to decorate the church interiors.

The only two "imported" items in the church are the pipe organ (at the right of the main altar) and the Carillon bells donated by the Dutch government.

However, to break the monotony of stone walls shrouding the church, Mañosa designed four landscaped patios (courtyards) allowing sunlight to stream in.

"But because of worsening pollution, the doors leading to these areas were closed and an air-conditioning system was installed," he said.

Art and architecture

The next time you visit the Edsa Shrine, take time to appreciate works by the country's top artists.

"Another way of remembering the first Edsa revolution is to appreciate the contributions of these artists who lent their time and talent in finishing the church," said Mañosa.

Speaking before churchgoers who stayed after the 7 p.m. Mass last month, Mañosa recounted the warm outpouring of support from artists who collaborated with him after the final plan was approved by Sin and then President Corazon Aquino.

Top artists

"There's Virginia Ty-Navarro's towering bronze statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The main altar table was designed by National Artist Napoleon Abueva [who also did the stations of the cross in the plaza above]," said Mañosa.

Adorning the main altar is the image of the Risen Christ, a three-meter glass and stainless steel sculpture by renowned glass sculptor Ramon Orlina.

Just above it is the stained-glass ceiling installed by Eduardo Castrillo, one of Asia's most progressive and original sculptors.

Renowned painter Ben Alano and his son Jake did the mural in the church's San Lorenzo Ruiz chapel, depicting scenes in the life of the first Filipino saint.

Still within the Edsa Shrine is the Perpetual Adoration Chapel, also with works by Castrillo.

Historical landmark

Most of the artworks are in good condition, Mañosa noted, although some require restoration.

"The landmark work of Angono muralist and sculptor Nemesio Miranda Jr. [Nemiranda] together with the Angono Ateliers is now faded. It depicts the scenes that unfolded during the historic 1986 event," he said.

Mañosa, a contemporary of National Artist Leandro Locsin, said he wanted to raise public awareness on the importance of the Edsa Shrine.

"I don't want this church to end up like the Cry of Balintawak Monument in Caloocan City," he said, "where motorists and passersby no longer recall the significance of such a historical landmark."

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Israel poised to pull out settlers from Gaza

JERUSALEM—Israel's Cabinet met on Sunday in a pivotal session expected to give the go-ahead to evacuate Jewish settlers from occupied Gaza and for the first time remove settlements from land where Palestinians want a state.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to evacuate settlers starting in July has been called a possible step toward peace by both Israelis and Palestinians, buoyed by optimism after a Feb. 8 truce agreement.

But another Israeli Cabinet decision expected on Sunday—to endorse a barrier route looping around major West Bank settlement blocs—was likely to add to Palestinian fears they would lose much of the West Bank that they also seek.

Cabinet approval for withdrawing from all of Gaza's 21 settlements and four of the 120 in the West Bank, already endorsed by parliament, would mean that settlers get the five months' notice they need according to the law.

"The evacuation of settlements is a difficult step, a very difficult one," Sharon, once considered the godfather of the settler movement, said as he convened his Cabinet. "But it is a crucial step for the future of the state of Israel."

Officials and pundits said the vote should pass easily.

Sharon has fought for over a year to get his withdrawal plan past rightists who once saw him as the settlers' patron and are loath to cede land captured in the 1967 Middle East war.

Polls show most Israelis welcome a withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, but ultranationalists say a pullout would be a "reward for Palestinian terrorism" and many settlers believe the land is a biblical birthright.

"There is no future in an Israeli presence in Gaza. It is not in our interests," Vice Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told Israel Radio. "It causes a never-ending conflict that leads to blood and more terror."

Even if the withdrawal is approved on Sunday, opponents could use a pending budget vote to bring down the government.

Sharon is still trying to juggle allies to back the budget and if he fails by the end of March, new elections must be called.

Further Cabinet votes would also be needed to approve the four-phase settlement evacuations nearer the time.

Israeli media said about 6,000 unarmed troops and police would be involved in removing each settlement. Settler leaders have urged nonviolent resistance, but security services have said there could still be bloody confrontations.

Concerns that withdrawals might be hampered by Palestinian militant attacks have receded somewhat since new President Mahmoud Abbas agreed a ceasefire with Sharon. Factions have not formalized the agreement, but are keeping a de facto truce.

As part of a package of post-summit gestures expected to include Israel's release of hundreds of jailed Palestinians, the army said it would allow 16 people deported to Gaza for "terror activities" to return to their homes in the West Bank on Sunday.

Israel's withdrawal from Gaza has been touted as a step toward reviving a US-backed "road map" that would lead to a Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel. Palestinians have agreed to coordinate with Sharon on some aspects.

But Palestinians remain worried that Sharon aims to abandon impoverished Gaza while holding on to far more populous West Bank settlement blocs that would deny them a viable state.

Palestinian anger is certain to grow if the Israeli Cabinet approves a final stage of the barrier route taking in the biggest blocs near Jerusalem. Israel says the barrier stops suicide bombers. Palestinians call it a land grab. The World Court has ruled the structure illegal. *Reuters*

RED HAT LEADER

Sue Ellen Cooper, founder of the Red Hat Society, holds her dog Frosty Feb. 14 at the Red Hat Society Imperium store in Fullerton, Calif. The Society counts more than 800,000 members and 36,000 chapters in the United States. The women, who are mainly over 50, gather to see theater, have tea, play cards and to generally have a good time. AP

Half-million rally against fox hunt ban

STRATTON AUDLEY, England—Up to half a million hunters and supporters rallied across England and Wales Saturday in a massive display of force against a new fox hunting ban, vowing to reverse the controversial law.

From the southernmost county of Cornwall to the northern tip of Northumberland, riders with their hounds tested the legislation that came into force Friday, while other people on foot wore stickers denouncing the ban.

But animal activists called on hunters to learn to live with the rules and warned that a small number of prosecutions were likely to follow after they handed over videotaped evidence to the police, alleging violations.

Police said they had arrested four people in the southwest county of Wiltshire under the new law, which bans the hunting of foxes and other animals, but stressed the incident—involving four dogs and a dead hare—was not connected to the organized hunts, which numbered over 250 across the country.

Dressed in red or black jackets, mounted on horses and with hounds yapping at their heels the men, women and children who took to the countryside looked and sounded like genuine hunters, just without the fox in full flight. *AFP*

Taped conversations give glimpses of next president

WASHINGTON—As George W. Bush was first moving onto the national political stage, he often turned for advice to an old friend who secretly taped some of their private conversations, creating a rare record of the future president as a politician and personality.

In the last several weeks, that friend, Doug Wead, an author and former aide to Bush's father, disclosed the tapes' existence to a reporter and played about a dozen of them.

BUSH AFP

Variously earnest, confident or prickly in those conversations, Bush weighs the political risks and benefits of his religious faith, discusses campaign strategy and comments on rivals. John McCain "will wear thin," he predicted. John Ashcroft, he confided, would be a "very good Supreme Court pick" or a "fabulous" vice president. And in exchanges about his handling of media questions about his past, Bush appears to have acknowledged trying marijuana.

Wead said he recorded the conversations because he viewed Bush as a historic figure, but he said he knew that the president might regard his actions as a betrayal. As the author of a new book about presidential childhoods, Wead could benefit from any publicity, but he said that was not a motive in disclosing the tapes.

The conversations Wead played offer insights into Bush's thinking from the time he was weighing a run for president in 1998 to shortly before he accepted the Republican nomination in 2000. Wead had been a liaison to evangelical Protestants for the president's father, and the intersection of religion and politics is a recurring theme in the talks.

Preparing to meet Christian leaders in September 1998, Bush told Wead, "As you said, there are some code words. There are some proper ways to say things, and some improper ways." He added, "I am going to say that I've accepted Christ into my life. And that's a true statement."

Bush, who has acknowledged a drinking problem years ago, told Wead on the tapes that he could withstand scrutiny of his past. He said it involved nothing more than "just, you know, wild behavior." He worried, though, that allegations of cocaine use would surface in the campaign and blamed his opponents for stirring up rumors. "If nobody shows up there's no story," he told Wead, "and if somebody shows up it is going to be made up." But when Wead said that Bush had in the past publicly denied using cocaine, Bush replied, "I haven't denied anything."

He refused to answer reporters' questions about his past behavior, he said, even though it might cost him the election. Defending his approach, Bush said: "I wouldn't answer the marijuana questions. You know why? Because I don't want some little kid doing what I tried."

New York Times News Service

Thailand cloning dozens of breeding bulls, cows

BANGKOK—Thai scientists have cloned more than a dozen breeding bulls and cows since 2003 and expect to clone 50 more this year to improve herds amid a ban on US imports, the project's team leader said Sunday.

Rangsun Parnpai, head of a research team at Suranaree University of Technology in Thailand's northeast, said his team had successfully cloned 14 calves over the past 15 months.

They include seven males produced with stem cells from the ear of Toom Tam, a red Brahmin bull, that were implanted in the womb of a surrogate mother, and four female calves from cells from another red Brahmin, named Benz, he said.

"All the calves are healthy, there is nothing wrong with them," he told AFP.

One of Benz's cloned offspring, Benz 3, was to be presented to Thailand's Princess Maha C hakri Sirindhorn, the king's daughter, when she presents degrees to students at the university on Monday, he said.

Cloning of a premium cow that can produce up to 8,000 kilograms of milk per year was also being undertaken at the university's farm in Chon Buri province.

"The cloning will help Thai farmers own high-breed cows on a low budget, as the country has banned imported breeds from the United States," Rangsun said. *AFP*

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MACAU	90	140	LOS ANGELES	330	520
TOKYO	190	400	NEW YORK	380	780
OSAKA	190	400	GUAM	290	400
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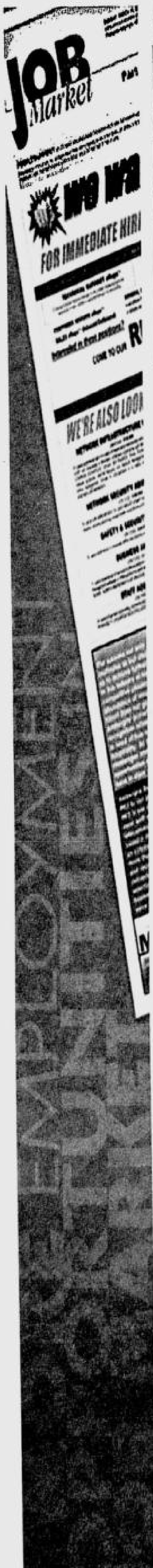

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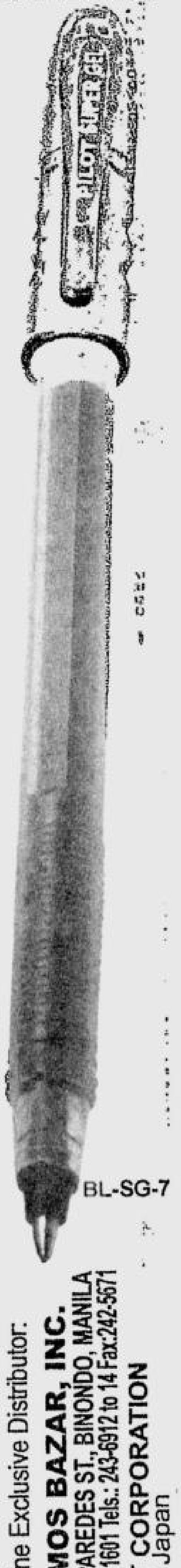

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EU charter faces test in Spain

MADRID, Spain—The European Union constitution faced its first test at the grass-roots level Sunday as Spaniards started voting on it in a referendum, with the prospect of low turnout threatening to get the landmark document off to a sluggish start.

Both of Spain's major parties back the charter and passage was expected, but the government has acknowledged that turnout might be very low, saying it would consider 33 percent reasonable. The referendum is nonbinding, with Parliament having the final say.

All 25 EU countries must ratify the constitution for it to take effect. Three have done so through their parliaments and Spain is the first of 11 holding referendums.

More than 106,000 police were on duty to provide security around the country as voting got under way at 9 a.m.

The document approved by EU leaders in October is designed to streamline EU decision-making as the bloc expands eastward, making it more efficient and giving it global clout on par with its economic might.

The rest of Europe was watching the Spanish vote closely because in several countries also due to hold referendums this year or in 2006, including Britain and France, passage is not considered a foregone conclusion and governments want Spain to set a good example.

As campaigning concluded Friday night, Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero said the vote is as important as a 1978 referendum in which Spaniards approved their own constitution, restoring a democratic charter three years after the death of Gen. Francisco Franco.

"Now we have another historic opportunity and must not squander it," Zapatero told a rally in Madrid. "We cannot miss the opportunity to be protagonists and set the course for all Europeans with a massive 'yes.'"

Zapatero has said Spanish approval of the document would be a natural progression for a country that was a relative latecomer to what is now the EU and has benefited greatly from membership, in everything from aid funds to culture and science.

Concerns over low turnout stem from the fact that Spaniards tend to be unenthusiastic about EU voting unless ballots coincide with a national election. In last June's European Parliament elections, turnout was 45 percent, compared with more than 70 percent in the country's general election three months earlier.

If participation on Sunday is low, even if the charter is approved, it could be seen as stumbling out of the starting gate. Analysts say this would delight Euroskeptics in Britain and elsewhere, and could lead to a domino effect that might sink the constitution altogether.

Low turnout would also raise the question of what kind of mandate Zapatero would have if and when he goes before Parliament with a voter-approved constitution in hand.

Last week he said he considered the referendum politically binding, even though legally it is not: "I will respect the majority opinion of the Spanish people," Zapatero said, suggesting that if voters nix the constitution, he won't submit it for a vote in Parliament. He did not elaborate on the pledge. *AP*

AN ELEPHANT OF A PAINTING

Elephants paint on the canvas during a new Guinness record attempt of most expensive painting by elephants at Maesa elephant camp in Chiang Mai province northern Thailand, Feb. 19. The elephants used acrylic colors on the 2.4 m by 6 m canvas called "Wind, Mist, Lanna Charm Number One." The painting sold for $39,500, with the proceeds going to a pachyderm sanctuary. AFP

A YOUNG boy holds a portrait of Nepali King Gyanendra during a welcome and support rally in Kathmandu Feb. 20. Social groups, schools and volunteers organized a peace rally in the capital supporting the King's decision to assume absolute power. REUTERS

Nepal king's gamble takes unexpected turn

By Neelesh Misra

KATHMANDU, Nepal—Nepal's destiny is being shaped by two men who command thousands of fighters—one from a palace, the other from somewhere in the mountains.

From the Narayanhiti Palace, King Gyanendra made a risky move this month, sacking the government, declaring an emergency and placing an iron grip on the tiny nation of 23 million—or at least the part not controlled by cadres of the guerrilla leader in the mountains, who likes to call himself "Prachanda" or "the feared one."

But more than three weeks on, the king's wager is not entirely playing out by the book. The country's unpopular politicians are sidelined and public opinion is calm if not satisfied—but its closest allies India, the United States and Britain have rejected the takeover, and other aid donors are threatening to pull out.

"It doesn't look as if things are straight yet. There are complications," said Yubaraj Ghimire, editor of Nepalese weekly Samay. The international community has reacted very differently from what he thought."

Gyanendra justified the Feb. 1 royal takeover by saying it was a move against Maoist rebels fighting to establish a communist state and corrupt and inefficient politicians.

He called it a last-ditch attempt to restore order in Nepal, which has faced multiple crises since it became a constitutional democracy in 1990. That was when violent nationwide protests forced King Birendra, Gyanendra's late brother, to give up absolute power after two centuries of aristocratic rule.

Many in Nepal suspect Gyanendra wants those powers back.

"The ultimate objective of the king's action is to attain powers that were taken away by the people's movement," said Ram Saran Mahat, a top leader of the largest party, the Nepali Congress.

The advent of Nepal's multiparty democracy came at the end of a 30-year authoritarian reign by Gyanendra's father King Mahendra and later his brother King Birendra, a time known as the "Panchayat" when political parties were banned and civil liberties were limited.

King Gyanendra "has said that he will restore democracy in three years but the faces with which he has packed his government are all proponents of the Panchayat era. They hate the multiparty system," said Ghimire.

But Nepal's politicians have also lost much credibility over the 15 years that they have been in power, with frequent squabbles, government changes and corruption allegations.

During the emergency, many have been placed under house arrest, others have fled, and the handful that remain find themselves marginalized and irrelevant. *AP*

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Threat of bird flu epidemic a 'sword of Damocles'—UN

HANOI—The deadly bird flu epidemic, outbreaks of which have hit several Asian countries and killed 45 people since 2003, is a "sword of Damocles" hanging over the world, a top UN official said Sunday.

To prevent the further spread of the disease requires both immediate and long-term action, director of animal health at the Food and Agriculture Organization, Joseph Domenech, said.

Countering the virus will be the focus of a regional conference beginning Wednesday in Vietnam's southern economic capital of Ho Chi Minh City.

"The time is ripe today for the international community to see how the virus constitutes an enormous sword of Damocles in terms of public health and the rural economy," Domenech told AFP during an interview.

"The conference in Ho Chi Minh City has to acknowledge this so we can take both urgent action and long-term measures against the disease."

The H5N1 virus has already forced the culling of millions of birds in Asia and killed people in Vietnam and Thailand.

Yet Domenech said Asian and Western countries were tempted last year to consider themselves clear of the virus, even as scientific studies had proven it was still in existence in the region.

"Many countries believed that the problem had been resolved, particularly after declarations from China, Vietnam and Thailand saying the virus had been eradicated," he said.

"But we knew then that the virus could be carried by animals which don't develop the disease," ensuring that it could remain in the environment without being formally detected.

Maintaining a worldwide awareness was complex as the human death toll was so far limited, Domenech said.

The international community had been easy to mobilize after the tsunami that killed hundreds of thousands in Asia in December, but it was harder to organize on a long-term basis for avian influenza, he said. *AFP*

FERRY DISASTER

Relatives mourn after recovering a relative's body from a ferry disaster near Dhaka, Feb. 20. Police divers and local rescuers recovered at least 37 bodies several hours after the ferry carrying around 500 passengers capsized during a cyclone overnight in Bariganga River, about 15 km from capital Dhaka. AFP

Stash found in Belfast linked to big bank heist

BELFAST—Irish police for the first time Saturday linked a stash of stolen money found in Belfast with a spectacular bank robbery in the city last December as suspicion about IRA involvement in the crime grew.

The Irish government has accused the Irish Republican Army of having a hand in the Northern Bank robbery as well as attempts to launder cash.

But Gerry Adams, head of Sinn Fein—the political wing of the paramilitary Irish Republican Army—denies any connection to the probe, which has so far detained eight suspects and seized some 2.5 million pounds (3.5 million euros, $4.6 million) as well as documents and computers.

Six of the detainees have since been released.

Police confirmed that 50,000 pounds found in the toilets of the New Forge police recreational club on Friday were linked to the bank raid.

But they hinted that the discovery, which was sparked by an anonymous tip-off, might be a false lead.

"This could be an elaborate prank aimed at directing attention away from the events elsewhere over the last few days," a spokesperson told AFP on Friday.

Officials in both Belfast and Dublin blame the IRA for stealing 26.5 million pounds from the Belfast bank on Dec. 20.

Sinn Fein strongly denies the allegation, which has thrown efforts toward restoring power-sharing government in the British province into disarray. *AFP*

US, Japan express 'deep concern' over North Korea

WASHINGTON—The United States and Japan expressed "deep concern" Saturday over North Korea's nuclear weapons program and declared Taiwan a common security concern in the face of a Chinese military buildup.

The two allies capped talks here between their foreign and defense ministers with pledges to work for peace in Northeast Asia against various threats to regional stability.

A joint statement by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and her Japanese counterpart, Nobutaka Machimura, expressed dismay over North Korea's Feb. 10 announcement it had produced nuclear arms and would boycott the talks.

"The US secretary of state and the Japanese foreign minister made clear their deep concern over the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) foreign ministry statement," the parties said.

"The statement by the DPRK only further isolates it from the international community and runs counter to the efforts by the parties concerned to peacefully resolve the nuclear issue through the six-party talks." Neither the Americans nor the Japanese offered any immediate inducement to North Korea to return to the negotiating table. But both hinted at possible international action against the insular Stalinist regime if it stayed away.

"Should we let the time slip, then I think it will only worsen the situation, because I'm sure the international community will become tougher vis-a-vis North Korea," Machimura said.

Rice said: "The North Koreans are the ones that are isolated in this, and they ought to return to those talks so that people don't have to contemplate other measures."

Neither chief diplomat went into specifics, but their joint statement reiterated their commitment "to continuing to seek a peaceful diplomatic resolution of the nuclear issue" through negotiations. *AFP*

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Open City

EDITORIAL

THE BATTLE for Manila 60 years ago did not change the course of World War II or hasten its end. It did not inaugurate a new phase in the Pacific campaign or create a military breakthrough. But it was marked by unspeakable atrocities and plumbed new depths of human suffering. For that reason alone, it deserves to be remembered, not only in the country but around the world.

The incomparable success of Gen. Douglas MacArthur's leapfrogging strategy had put Allied forces within invading distance of Japan two years after the fall of Bataan. Japanese outposts had famously withered on the vine, left behind without supply lines and reinforcements as the Allies attacked some islands and skipped others.

The ironic consequence of MacArthur's success was that it threatened to make his celebrated promise to return to the Philippines militarily irrelevant. American commanders at the highest levels asked: Why not skip the Philippines altogether? Their preferred base of operations for an invasion of Japan was Taiwan, then known as Formosa.

When the Philippine plan finally prevailed, the stage was set for one of the most heartrending stories in the annals of warfare.

On the due of what survivors still call liberation, more Filipinos died in a single series of events than at any other time in history. The Battle of Manila was tsunami-like in its devastating impact: More than 100,000 died in the four weeks of fighting between Feb. 3 and March 3, 1945. Most of them relived Rizal's nightmare: that is, they died without seeing freedom dawn.

The INQUIRER series in the last two weeks drew an indelible portrait of that horrific experience. Many of the dead were consumed in an orgy of violence, started by Japanese naval troops stationed in Manila and under orders to defend what was then the largest occupied city in Japan's so-called Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Many more were killed in an unending rain of fire: the Americans' massive and unrelenting artillery bombardment. Many others died simply because they were caught in the indiscriminate flames of crossfire.

We honor all of them by remembering their ordeal, their holocaust. But we honor them best by honoring those who survived them.

For every story of a baby bayoneted in the air, we must remember those who survived with desperate cunning, those who played dead, for instance, even when Japanese soldiers knifed them to make sure they were dead.

For every story of a family trapped by a collapsing, bomb-weakened wall, we must remember those who dug holes or helped others find trenches, braving shrapnel or debris on their missions of mercy. The honor roll, thankfully, goes on and on.

By praising them, we don't simply mean to ease their "survivor's guilt." By recognizing their pluck, their grace under intense pressure, their sheer will to live, we honor that which makes up truly human.

At a time of unbearable anguish, when the line separating man from beast was crossed again and again, the common example of human beings doing uncommon things was a sign of hope: Despite the horrors of war, in a city that should have been by all lights declared open a second time since 1942, it was possible to imagine life as it ought to be once again.

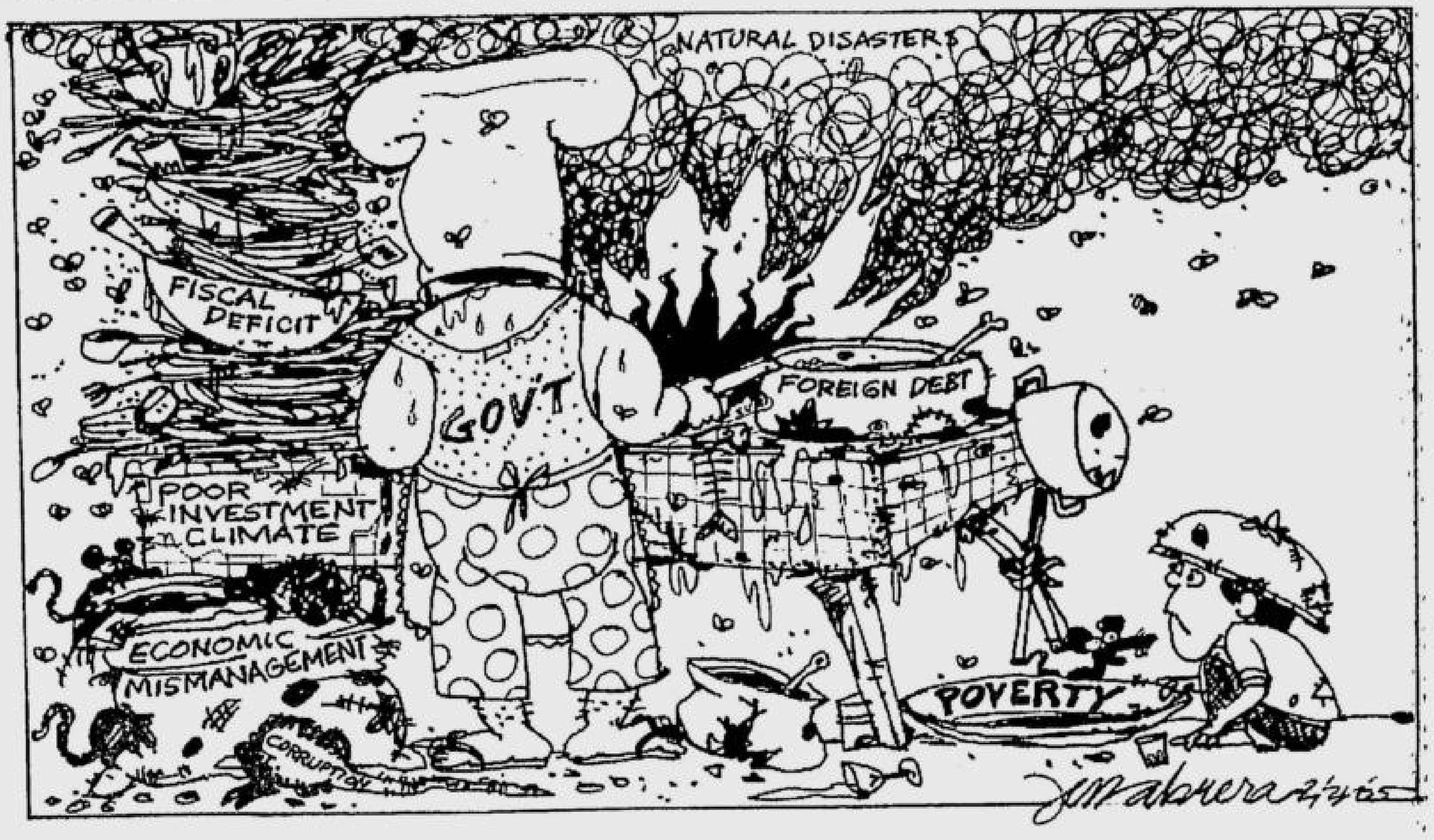
Much remains undone

FOREIGN COMMENT

WHILE much hope is being pinned on the Kyoto Protocol, much remains undone. Although the target of reducing greenhouse gases has already been set for the first phase of five years starting in 2008, the countries concerned have many matters to discuss for the long-range plan.

Moreover, the United States bolted from the protocol and President George W. Bush said his country would not return to it. The United States, the world's largest producer of greenhouse gases, decries the protocol for its failure to oblige China and India. China, the second largest producer of the gases, retorts that the United States and other developed countries should perform their duty first. Such mutual recrimination is not productive.

One estimate forecasts that the United States and China will produce 37 percent of the world's carbon dioxide in 2010. Incidentally, Japan produces just under 4 percent of the world total. It is essential that the greenhouse gases produced by China and other countries, as well as the United States, be regulated in one way or another in the second phase of the Kyoto Protocol. *Asahi Shimbun (Tokyo)*



Of cops and 'counterfeit' medicines

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

A SUSPECTED dealer in fake medicines was arrested in a buy-bust operation in San Fernando, Pampanga before the weekend, while the Department of Health revealed that 80 percent of medicines sold in drugstores and pharmacies in the Ilocos region are fake. Around P5 million worth of medicines were confiscated in San Fernando. The capsules were filled with corn starch; others were expired medicines, their expiration dates altered. Samples obtained from Ilocos drugstores contained ash and flour.

The manufacturers and distributors of fake medicines should be given long prison sentences because they put the lives and health of patients at risk. Fake medicines have long been a problem here; one reason for this is the high cost of medicines sold by multinational pharmaceutical companies. Many years ago, a notorious manufacturer of fake medicines could not be nailed by the police because he was very influential and had plenty of money to bribe officials. He had many friends in at least one morning daily and he even tried to tempt me. I was then the managing editor of the Daily Express; he came to the newsroom and introduced to me his girlfriend, a very pretty woman. One night this girlfriend came to the newsroom alone and after some small talk hinted that if I wanted a date with her I was welcome. Of course, I did not bite the bait.

That was how the guy operated and the police could not do anything with him. Until one night our police reporter called in to say that he had been killed during a high-speed car chase near Roxas Boulevard with a police team led by then Manila police chief Alfredo Lim. His case was somewhat similar to that of Don Pepe Oyson who, despite his notoriety, could not be nailed by the police. He had so many friends in the right places. Until one night he was fetched from a billiard hall by Robert Barbers, then a police detective. On the way to the Manila Police Department, inside a closed van, he allegedly grabbed a pistol and tried to escape. He was shot dead; end of the problem.

Barbers later became congressman and then senator and his chief, Lim, is now also a popular senator, proof that good cops who really fight criminality the best they can are rewarded with high office.

Why am I telling this? Because the policemen now are so different, and I miss the old days. Most policemen then were feared by criminals. When a policeman got killed, the order to every cop was: "Leave everything else; get the killer!" The cop-killer usually had less than 24 hours to live. He is often buried before the funeral of the slain cop.

These days, policemen get assassinated, but no suspects to the killings are arrested. Cops are not feared anymore—not by criminals or by drivers. As little as P50 will usually settle any traffic violation, a kindly behavior quickly learned by the traffic enforcers of the Metro Manila Development Authority. The last policeman feared, after Lim and Barbers, was Panfilo Lacson, when he was still the chief of the Philippine National Police. He is now also a senator, one more proof that good cops go places. Compare them to the present crop of policemen.

* * *

But going back to fake medicines, I notice that the word being used in the press releases and news reports is "counterfeit." By legal definition of the World Health Organization, imported genuine medicine of the same content and quality as medicines manufactured here are included in the label "counterfeit." Therefore, the word embraces the less expensive medicines imported by the Philippine government itself to give Filipinos an alternative to the high-priced medicines manufactured here by multinational companies. Filipinos are thus being frightened from buying this cheaper government imports by the propaganda campaign of the Coalition Against Fake Medicines.

I am all for informing the people about fake medicines, and the coalition should be complimented for its campaign. But its information drive is incomplete. It does not clarify that the cheaper medicines being imported and sold by the government's own Philippine International Trading Center are not fake medicines. I have written about this in two previous columns, but I have yet to read a press release or clarification on this from the coalition.

And it is not true that the DOH, supported by the Department of Trade and Industry, is the lead agency in the propaganda campaign of the coalition. The PITC is a subsidiary of the DTI. The propaganda is an initiative of multinational companies—one sells medicines, and the other manufactures all the medicines of all the foreign-owned pharmaceuticals here—and a giant drugstore chain. The DOH and DTI and the others were just invited to join the coalition. A professional public relations agency is doing the propaganda work.

Some people suspect that the sudden campaign against "counterfeit" medicines was prompted by the PITC's parallel importations of medicines which could cut into the multinationals' 80-percent hold on the Philippine drug market. The imported medicines are very much cheaper, many of them less than half of the prices of those made here. If the imported medicines are not the target of the coalition's propaganda, why is there no clarification to make everything clear, as all information campaigns should?

We should all fight fake medicines (and there is no doubt that there are many of them), but please avoid collateral damage to legitimate government imports that are meant to give Filipinos access to cheaper medicines.

Right and wrong

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I ASKED my sources last week about the St. Valentine's Day massacre. I couldn't understand how the Abu Sayyaf, which was reported to have claimed the deed, could have done it. Last we heard, they had pretty much been wiped off the face of the earth. They had lost their key people, they were on the run. How they could plant bombs in key cities and set them off simultaneously seemed to strain credulity.

On the other hand, if it had been the Moro National Liberation Front, or the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, why would they want to do it? Renewed hostilities with the government would merely fall in with the US caricature of the Philippines as a terrorist flashpoint and the government's anti-terrorist rhetoric, which it periodically raises to strident levels every time it loses points with the public. And it has been losing big, with foreign investors fleeing, the Germans at the head of them, the country being downgraded by foreign creditors, and the public incensed over a proposed VAT increase.

The bombings looked like a "wag the dog" scenario, or government producing a crisis the exact same way Mother Lily produces movies. As it turned out, it wasn't so at all. This was what I gathered:

The bombings were truly the handiwork of the Muslim groups. What triggered it was a sortie by government troops at nighttime in Patikul, generally held as an MNLF "area of control." A heated exchange ensued between the duly-elected councilor and the leader of the troops. Fearing for their safety, the soldiers opened fire, killing the councilor, his wife, his two children, and his brother. The councilor happened to be an in-law of a high-ranking MNLF official. The entire Muslim community protested the incident, to no avail. The official military version was that the troops had encountered a renegade band.

Fuming over the atrocity, the MNLF and its allies retaliated by raiding a military camp. Fuming further over their unrest being depicted as caused by the fate of Nur Misuari rather than by the atrocities wrought upon them by government—the military apparently routinely shelled civilian areas with mortar fire—the groups decided to give government "a taste of its own medicine." They bombed three key cities to make the rest of the country experience what they were experiencing.

I don't know how much of this is true. But even if it were so, it does not justify anything. At the very least, if the Muslim groups felt aggrieved and scorned and wanted to bring the war to the capital, they could have attacked Camps Aguinaldo and Crame. Doubtless, government and the media could still depict that as an act of terrorism, but it would at least be understandable, if not defensible. Why in God's, or Allah's, name massacre the innocent? The boy who died in Davao and the folk who were charred beyond recognition in a bus in Ayala never did anybody any harm.

As 9/11 shows, if massacring the innocent does anything, it is not to make the public see the original provocation, it is only to make the public see the results of the retaliation. It is not to make the public feel sympathy for the perpetrators, it is to make the public feel hatred for them. It is not to prevent the people, or their own, from being harmed further, it is to assure they would be so. Terrorism is always counterproductive. All it does is to silence the groups calling for sanity and give credence to those calling for unleashing the dogs of war.

But none of this as well justifies a knee-jerk anti-Muslim, or anti-Moro, campaign, couched in the language of anti-terrorism. None of this justifies escalating the conflict by painting the country as drowning in flames. Muslim Mindanao has been like this for decades—Elmer Jacinto, who topped the medical board exam, spoke of gunfire being background noise while their teacher taught in their high school in Basilan—and nobody has thought to say this. Escalating the conflict can only bode for more atrocity, the very thing that sparked the bombings to begin with.

I caught Gen. Edgar Aglipay and several top PNP officials being interviewed on TV, and they were saying the bombings ushered in a new phase of terrorism that would see violence spreading throughout the country. Yet government officials, who endorse this depiction, are first to bristle whenever the United States and other countries issue advisories against their nationals visiting this country. We suggest we are the next Belfast, Beirut, or Baghdad, and we fume that potential visitors refuse to buy the DOT ads proclaiming us to be the next paradise? It is not too late for talks to stop the madness.

Certainly, none of this justifies giving GMA emergency powers to deal with terrorism. She is the scariest person to give added powers to. That is by no means hypothetical, as the months immediately following 9/11 showed. She made us look at the world through the eyes of the National Security Council.

I'm glad that Joker Arroyo, like Nene Pimentel, has not lost his libertarian instincts, and has spoken out against the proposal to allow wiretapping, warrantless arrests, and the other things dear to Ping Lacson's and Alfredo Lim's heart. By themselves, these powers are dangerous, as those who experienced 9/11 themselves have learned over the last three years: The Homeland Security Act does not stop terror, it institutionalizes it. You put those powers in the hands of someone who, as Jovito Salonga says, has shown she would stop at nothing to remain in power, heaven help us! Those will not be used to fight terrorists, they will be used to fight critics. To this day Horacio "Boy" Morales continues to be tagged as a "destabilizer."

You do not compound a wrong by another wrong. The MNLF should have seen that. Let's make sure we do.

View from the Muslim minority

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE RENEWED move to institute a national ID system, which is supported by President Macapagal-Arroyo and by leading opposition figures, such as Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, has revived the debate on the wisdom of adopting it. The advocates are pushing it as a principal defense against terrorism. On the other hand, Senators Joker Arroyo and Francis Pangilinan oppose it as a violation of the people's civil rights, such as their right to privacy. All this time, the debate over the ID system has been conducted from the point of view of those who need to be "protected" from terrorism. But there's another viewpoint that probably has not been amply taken into account—that of the Muslim minority, from whose ranks the terrorists are supposed to spring.

* * *

A news item in the Manila Standard reported that in Culiat, Quezon City, where a large Muslim community thrives, Muslim residents are for the use of the ID, saying "it will protect them from illegal arrests, harassment and violence." The residents were quoted as saying that the ID system will identify them as legitimate residents of a community that, they said, has been "unfairly tagged" as a haven for terrorists and criminals.

* * *

This stand of the Culiat Muslim community gives the other side of the issue—a national ID could help protect minority groups and members from "legal" physical harassment. One drawback, of course, is that in this country anything can be faked, and abusive police elements can use the national ID to further harass people—by claiming that the ID they carry is fake. But if you ask me, I think there are more benefits than disadvantages to be derived from having a national ID system. We just have to live with the possible abuses and seek to minimize them.

* * *

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez is the kind of official who doesn't seem to be daunted by contrary opinion. He believes in speaking out his mind and calling a spade a spade, almost unmindful of the consequences to himself, such as having a rough time at the Commission on Appointments which he will face soon. I think officials like him ought to be supported by the public.

Recently, Gonzalez was quoted as saying that transporting detained MNLF chief Nur Misuari from his Fort Sto. Domingo cell in Laguna to the House of Representatives to attend a hearing (on the recent outbreak of hostilities between his loyal followers and the Armed Forces) would be a very risky thing to do. Party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo and a few other lawmakers from the group had earlier filed a resolution seeking to compel Misuari to attend such a hearing. Gonzalez opined that while he cannot prevent Misuari from appearing in Congress if summoned, it would be better if the lawmakers, for security reasons, traveled to Laguna to hear him out. PNP Chief Edgar Aglipay feels the same way: let the lawmakers go to Sto. Domingo instead.

* * *

Gonzalez and Aglipay are absolutely right: at the very least an attempt to free Misuari while in transit could hurt people on both sides. If his loyalists succeed in rescuing him, it would be another international embarrassment the Philippines doesn't need. As for Ocampo, I must confess that I am disappointed with some of his actuations in recent months. First, there was his support for the Hacienda Luisita "strikers" instead of for the Department of Labor and Employment that was trying to mediate between the two sides and uphold the rule of law. Surely, Ocampo must realize the danger of transporting Misuari to Congress. I campaigned hard for Ocampo the first time he ran for the House under the party-list system because I believed that the House could use the presence of the progressive elements, which could serve as the much-needed conscience for the dominant elite there. But lately the perception of many people is that his group has been more interested to foment trouble and seek the country's downfall.

* * *

One group that has emerged larger than life in recent years is the Couples for Christ movement, whose major project, the "Gawad Kalinga" (GK), has caught the attention of the nation and the world. GK involves the creation of complete communities for the more marginalized sectors of the nation, which begins with the building of low-cost housing for community dwellers. Each GK community is a tripartite partnership: the land usually donated by some richer folks; the funding for the houses raised by CFC from corporate sources; and the labor to build the houses supplied by the people who will later occupy them; hence the latter have a big stake in their communities.

* * *

In our Sunday evening dzRH program two months ago, Cecile Alvarez and I had as guests two CFC officials: Jose Mari Oquinena, GK regional coordinator for the Visayas and coordinator for partnership with the local government units, and Raul S. Dizon, GK coordinator in the national capital region. They described how the GK program works. They brought along some community leaders, humble folk who spoke of their labor contribution and their abiding belief in the CFC principles. One noted the deep conviction both the leaders and their followers exuded in the task of nation-building that they are doing.

What I like very much about the CFC movement and its GK project is that they seek to build rather than destroy, in the process relying on the principle of self-help. What they are trying to foment is a revolution from the grass roots upwards. This is so different from the aim of the dissident movements in this country, which seem bent only on destroying.

'Bombapalooza 2'

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

"IT was a security nightmare," confessed an executive of Matina Town Square, a complex housing several trendy bars in Davao City. MTS, as almost everyone knows, hosted last Feb. 12 the 10-second nationwide "Lovapalooza 2." The pre-Valentine event attracted a big smooching crowd, mostly teenagers, out to establish a world-record number of couples kissing simultaneously.

Despite the nightmarish security concerns, the organizers hailed the mass-kissing party as a huge success. The event was a testament to the city's vibrant state, it has been claimed, despite the city's many unsolved extra-judicial killings (and the ongoing war in some parts of Sulu). That was one irony of the event that did not escape the attention of the widely circulated Mindanao Daily Mirror.

In its Valentine's Day editorial, the Mirror said: "All would have been benign, actually, were it not for the backdrop of lawlessness prevailing in the city. For how ironic it is that we're celebrating Valentine's Day today amidst a pall of fear and helplessness. How ironic it is that we have the nerve to enjoin the masses to kiss and party, when it is their ranks that have been traditionally decimated in the name of national security, anti-terrorism or law and order. Indeed, it was a steamy, if not sinister, diversion. We've had more than one murder a day hereabouts since the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve, which is galling to say the least."

Mirror's editorial aptly summed up the concerns of many Davaoeños over the continued failure of law enforcement authorities in Davao City to solve the murders committed by motorcycle-riding gunmen, whose victims since Jan. 1, 2005 now number 50, including Panabo City lawyer Reuel Dalguntas who was killed Feb. 5.

The killing of Dalguntas, authorities claimed, was a "copy-cat" killing by hired goons; it was not a hit by self-proclaimed vigilantes out to eliminate crime suspects in the city. "Yet, this will not erase the fact these killings were happening because of the continued failure of law enforcement authorities to run after these motorcycle-riding assassins," said the Integrated Bar of the Philippines-Davao City Chapter in its statement condemning the killing of Dalguntas, a former investigator of the Commission on Human Rights in Region 11.

* * *

Nonetheless, for all intents and purposes, it was still fortunate that the mass kissing party was held before Valentine's Day. Otherwise, "Lovapalooza 2" would have gone down on record as "Bombapalooza 2." Davao City is once again reeling from the Valentine's Day bombings that also hit the cities of General Santos and Makati.

The V-Day bombing clearly unnerved Davaoeños whose memories of the 2003 twin-bombings at the Davao International Airport and Sasa Wharf remain fresh. A 12-year-old boy selling durian candies at the Ecoland bus terminal was the lone fatality this time. But that did not diminish the city residents' shock. Especially because it happened a few meters away from the headquarters of the "anti-terrorist" military contingent Task Force Davao (TFD), which was created and is largely supported financially by the city government to secure the city's vital installations and establishments following the 2003 twin-bombings.

This early, as authorities track down the perpetrators of the V-Day bombings, fears are being raised by concerned groups that the "usual suspects"—the Moro community—will again be made the subject of illegal raids, searches and abductions. Indeed, in the aftermath of the more than 30 "mystery bombings" that have struck several parts of Mindanao since 2001, it has always been the Moro communities that suffered the brunt of retaliatory actions. In Davao City, for instance, four Moro leaders, abducted by armed men following the 2003 bombings, are still missing. Meanwhile, the court trial of the arrested suspects is yet to start. In contrast, until now, authorities have yet to identify and arrest those who strafed and bombed several Muslim mosques in Davao City, following the airport and seaport bombings.

The V-Day bombing also resurrected unanswered questions related to the 2003 bombings. Among these: Why the bombed airport area was "hastily cleaned up" even before experts could start their investigations. In fact, a foreign expert reportedly commented in jest that the bombers are really "professional" because the crime scene was "wiped clean." Also, several officers involved in the failed Oakwood mutiny had claimed that the Davao mosque bombings were ordered by their superiors, a claim that was merely dismissed and never seriously investigated.

But one important case that the authorities, especially the national government, have until now ignored is that of American Michael Terrence Meiring, the principal suspect in the May 16, 2002 bomb explosion in Evergreen Hotel in Davao City. A day after the explosion, alleged agents of the FBI spirited out of Davao City the wounded Meiring and nothing was heard of him since then. InPeace Mindanao, a civil society group, reported that Meiring is believed to be a CIA agent "with years of deep exposure and an expansive network of friends and contacts in Mindanao." The Meiring incident until now still angers Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, who has vowed to make Meiring "answer for his crimes."

Perhaps, before rushing to pass the so-called "anti-terrorism" law, it would be better for Congress to first look into who the real sponsors of terrorism in Mindanao and elsewhere in the country are.

* * *

Comments to karlos_z23@hotmail.com and kar_laws@yahoo.com

The 'Shooter'?

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

SOME say the sign of a healthy—or at the very least, overheated—economy is the proliferation of luxury cars. You can also say that the mania among the riche (nouveau or otherwise) to own exotic dogs is proof of abundance as well. You see incredibly hairy, exceedingly obese, grotesquely flat-faced, or shamefully skinny, short-haired and pointy-snouted puppies imprisoned in pet shops in nearly all our malls, selling for the price of a poor family's annual tuition for their children. The classified ads of our major newspapers are filled with notices of puppies and dogs for sale.

Dogs, it's safe to say, make for good business. Along Jupiter Street in Makati, is a dog-and-cat clinic sandwiched between some of the tonier restaurants in the city; here, the wealthiest families run into each other; here is where old money frowns at the newly moneyed who haul in their incompetently cared-for pets (a constant subject of horrified gossip among the upper class is the treatment pure-bred dogs allegedly get from their Chinese masters who buy them for display, not for love).

There are hairdressers and manicurists for dogs. There are people who can be hired to teach a dog manners. And, of course, there are many, many dog breeders who sell puppies for astronomical amounts, puppies with pedigrees that would put aristocrats to shame. It may be safe to say that except for a few families of Spanish origin, the majority of pure-bred dogs in this country boast of family trees more extensive than most of us could ever hope to display.

And most of all, there are "Shooters," proof positive of the ingenuity of the Filipino entrepreneur.

What is a "Shooter"? Read on. But we warn: This is not for the faint of heart, those sensitive about the biological functions of animals, or those who don't know what people are talking about when they refer to "the birds and the bees." This column is Rated R, folks.

First, some of the canine facts of life, as determined by their masters. Very few dog owners want to possess a combination of male and female dogs (unless they've been neutered) because of the danger of a doggie population explosion in their house. On the other hand, there comes a time when a dog owner's thoughts turn to the future, and he decides that it would be good if their dog had babies.

At this point, the dog owner has a couple of options: mate his dog with the dog of a friend, or hire a stud service. Obviously a stud service provides a stud, that is, a dog with impeccable papers to make someone else's bitch pregnant. If one owns a male, he also has the option of setting up his dog with someone else's bitch—the resulting puppies he and the owner of the bitch can divide between themselves.

So, presuming you own or have found a bitch in heat, and suitably qualified stud, you can then put the two together and hope that nature will take its course and leave the bitch in the family way. But there are times when you put a bitch and a stud together, only to find that the two cordially detest each other.

This is when a "Shooter" comes in.

This happened to a friend of a friend. He had a bitch and a stud in his house. He was looking forward to the consummation of the act of procreation. But to his disappointment, discovered that the bitch was inclined to bite the stud whenever it tried to do that "thing."

Money having changed hands in a non-refundable manner, the dog owner called another friend to find out if anything could be done to make the two dogs get along.

"Ah, what you need is a Shooter," said the person consulted in a conspiratorial tone of voice.

"Shooter? What?"

"Listen," explained my friends' friend's friend, "Here's a number. Call this guy. He'll take care of it, OK?"

"Uh, OK."

The number is called. A man answers and is informed of the situation. The man says he'd be over in 20 minutes. Sure enough, a man arrives 20 minutes later, and is brought to see the feuding couple.

Muzzles are produced; problem one—the biting—is taken care of. But the two dogs still don't seem interested.

Briskly, the man corners the stud and, through what is delicately referred to as the manipulation of the organ of procreation, manages to inspire the stud to heights of excitement previously thought impossible.

Just as the stud is about to reach that exquisite moment when it must see fireworks pop and feel the earth move, the "Shooter" deftly brings the stud near the hitherto unwilling bitch, positions the stud before the Sublime Portal, and... whoops-a-daisy, the deed is done. One happy stud and one rather surprised bitch find themselves having undertaken the unthinkable.

His mission accomplished, the "Shooter" (the origin of his title now made clear) receives his P200-fee, hops into his car and leaves.

The entire procedure took 20 minutes.

Unfortunately, the rather shocked friend of my friend didn't have the chance to find out how that man stumbled on "shooting" as a career. You have to uh, hand it to the guy though: it takes a lot of ingenuity to come up with an occupation that pays you P600 an hour, or, well, P200 a pop. But imagine, too, the happy pet owners.

One such happy owner was the former US ambassador to the Philippines, who told all and sundry about how he owed his giant poodles, "MacArthur" and "McKinley," to the efforts of a Filipino "Shooter." Indeed, "Wow, Philippines!"

Manila holocaust story

IN COMMEMORATION of the 60th anniversary of the sacking of Manila by Japanese military forces, the INQUIRER came out with a five-part series last week on the events that marked "the most vicious crime in Philippine history."

The articles recounted the gory experiences of several families in the hands of Japanese soldiers as American liberating troops advanced toward Manila in February 1945.

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

A reader (whose identity I prefer to keep under wraps) had mixed feelings about those stories. While he did not question the authenticity of the recollections of the survivors, he thought their stories did not deserve front-page treatment.

He wrote: "... I am convinced the series should have been treated as a feature story and not news. It should be in the Saturday Inquirer Magazine rather than in the newspaper.

"I also do not see the reason why you had to revive the deaths, pains and sufferings of the families mentioned after so many years have passed. You only brought back bad memories of the Liberation and instigated hatred for the Japanese people who have been very helpful to us.

"Will you please be careful in putting captions to your photos? You made the mistake twice of identifying the picture of a couple who were victims of the Liberation. Do you have proofreaders who review what comes out in your captions? Inaccuracy has no place in a reputable newspaper like you."

Memories

The editorial staff published the untold stories about the 1945 massacre in Manila because it felt it was important to inform the public about the brutalities of war. The series ran in the same week that the newspaper reported the events in the pitched battles between government soldiers and the forces loyal to jailed Moro leader Nur Misuari.

Although the fighting in Sulu may be described as "small" compared to what happened 60 years ago, the sufferings and pains of the civilians who got caught in the crossfire are no different from what their counterparts experienced in those bygone days.

I did not read anything in the articles in question that could be interpreted as rekindling feelings of hatred for the Japanese people like the way it happened in the years that followed the end of World War II.

It cannot be discounted that the stories may have unnerved some of the readers, especially those who lived through those horrible times. More so if they lost or have not accounted for a family member, loved one or friend. But I think the effect was not that serious as to make the affected readers think ill or wish evil on the present-day descendants of those Japanese soldiers.

It is common practice for newspapers in different parts of the world to commemorate or recount anniversaries of events that had a strong impact on their citizens. Because of the adverse effects of World War II on the international community, the critical stages of that conflict continue to be of interest to most people.

It's not because they want to relive or relish those moments. They simply want to be reminded of their lessons so the coming generations will not have to suffer them. As a famous historian puts it, "we should not forget the lessons of history lest we repeat them."

Similar coverage

By uncanny coincidence, during the same week that the INQUIRER featured the 1945 Manila massacre, German and Italian newspapers reported on similar human tragedies that happened within their territories at about the same period.

In Germany, thousands of Germans observed the 60th anniversary of the fierce bombing by Allied forces of the City of Dresden. Dubbed the "Florence of the North" for its unique Baroque structures, the city was nearly destroyed by waves of British and United States bombers when Germany was already on its knees. Some 20,000 Germans were killed by that military action.

In Italy, attention was focused on the thousands of Italians that the Yugoslav partisans killed and dumped in mountain crevices at the close of World War II. The victims were suspected of being Fascists, considered the archenemy at that time of communist-leaning Yugoslavia.

The two commemorative events opened old wounds among the affected parties. The neo-Nazis in Germany cited the Dresden bombing as an example of the atrocities inflicted by the Allied forces on the German people, belying the worldwide impression that only the German soldiers were guilty of war crimes.

For the Italians, the massacre of their compatriots brought back bitter memories of the political turmoil that hit Italy when then leader Benito Mussolini's Fascist Party held sway over the country. The Italians killed by the Yugoslav partisans were opposed to fascist rule. The tragedy had the tacit blessings of Mussolini.

Wrong caption

Going to the reader's complaint about the photo caption, in the Feb. 14 issue, the INQUIRER published the photo of a newly married couple who were killed by Japanese soldiers.

The caption read: "Dr. Antonio Lahoz, on wedding day with bride Benita: Bayoneted to death in the plaza ruins of the Sto. Domingo Church in Intramuros."

The following day, Feb. 15, the newspaper's Correction box bore the following remarks: "In yesterday's issue, the caption of a front-page photo ... mistakenly identified the couple as Dr. Antonio Lahoz and his first wife, Benita. In the photo were Dr. Manuel Lahoz and his second wife, Monica Laquindanum."

The correction to the correction turned out to be wrong. Thus, on Feb. 16, this correction came out: "... the Correction box misstated that Monica Laquindanum—the woman in the photo with Dr. Manuel Lahoz—was his second wife. Laquindanum was Lahoz's first wife. Lahoz's second wife was Benita Lorenzo—who was mistakenly identified as the woman in the caption of the same photo in the Feb. 14 issue."

If you find the correction a little confusing, we are in the same boat. It took me two readings of all the corrections before I was finally able to make odds and ends on who is who and who is not the lady in the photo in question.

The reader's complaint about the accuracy of photo captions is valid. The error is regrettable. If it were a picture about breaking news, the mistake may be attributed to deadline pressure. But since it was not—and, therefore there was sufficient time to check and double check the names in the caption—the booboo is inexcusable.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

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CAP's root problem

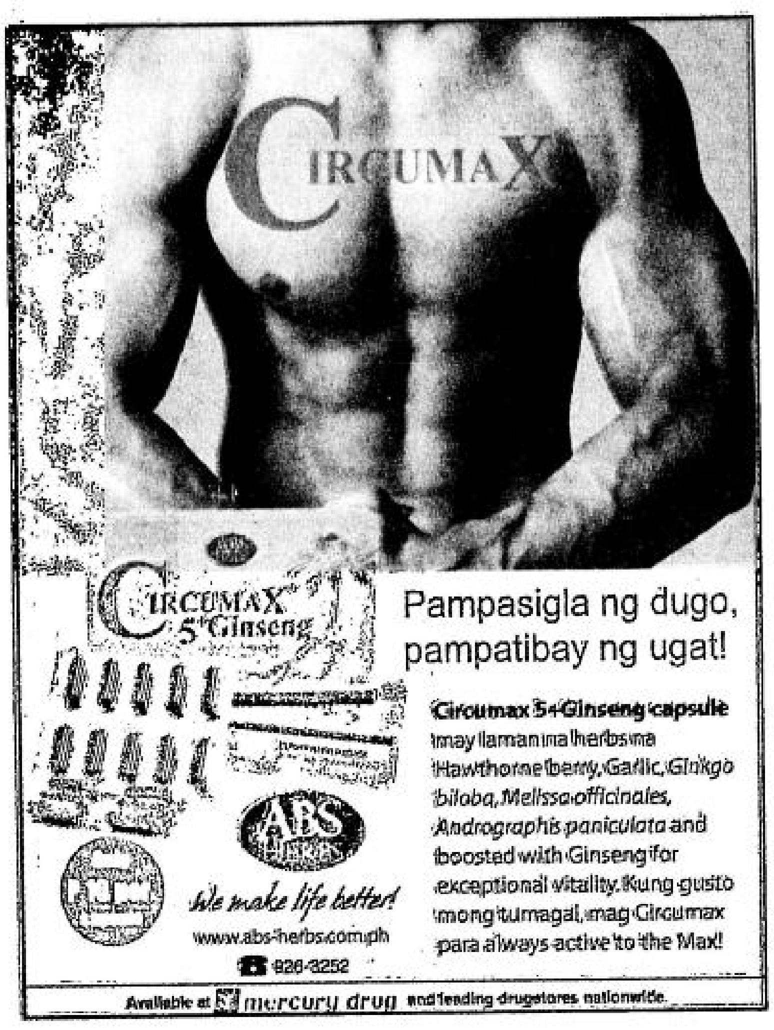
THE PRE-NEED industry in education was viable until the educational system was deregulated, allowing the tuition fee to gallop (about 20 percent per year) faster than the horses at the race tracks. This has been aggravated by the stiff competition in the industry and the latitude given the firms on the matter of investments.

As a parent whose three children completed their college studies through the educational plan, and seeing the problems now besetting it, I beg to disagree that this scheme was untenable from the outset with the "input" (payments) far "outweighed" by the "output" (school tuition fees).

It is true that the government must now exert every effort to adequately and effectively regulate the operations of the pre-need firms. But, there is the most important element in the equation: Unless we put more rational guidelines on how tuition fees and other charges should be set, the pre-need scheme is doomed.

The dreams of many parents and children especially those in the middle- and lower-income brackets could turn into nightmares. Let us collectively act on how to address the real problems.

—FREDDIE G. LUCHICO JR.,
1700 Bishop,
Brooksidehills,
Cainta, Rizal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LETTERS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Win-win solution to 24/7 row

IN THE RECENT weeks, there was this brouhaha about Sun Cellular's 24/7 offer.

I would like to make these suggestions, which I hope will put all market players on a level playing field. The National Telecommunications Commission should:

1. Issue a cease and desist order prohibiting Sun Cellular from issuing new pre-paid or post-paid SIM cards (just like what the agency once did with Globe), until Sun Cellular improves its system so as to be able to provide its clients with better service. Once Sun Cellular's network performs up to standard, the NTC may again allow the company to admit more subscribers.

2. Allow Sun Cellular to continue offering its 24/7 service, and encourage other mobile phone network operators to do so. (Note: Extelcom is also offering the same concept through its Express Unlimited service, but Smart or Globe never gave a damn about it, until Sun Cellular offered 24/7.) This concept is beneficial to all consumers.

The bottom line should be: the pricing concept should be encouraged, but the network performance and quality of Sun Cellular should be able to meet client requirements.

These suggestions would make for a win-win solution beneficial to all parties concerned, including the mobile phone users.

—ROMAN CARLOS BARREDO,
Queen's Row West,
Bacoor, Cavite

Not a corrupt public official

THIS pertains to a news item titled "GMA classmate wants old customs job back." (PDI, 1/28/05)

I have long been a firm believer of the INQUIRER's slogan "Balanced News, Fearless Views," and it never occurred to me that I would someday be complaining about the unfair and harsh treatment—in the form of a derogatory news article—I would be getting from the newspaper.

In the news item, reporter Armand Nocum depicted me as a corrupt, inefficient and abusive Bureau of Customs official who would do anything, including dropping the name of President Macapagal-Arroyo and announcing that she was my classmate, just to get my old post back.

If Nocum is a true adherent of balanced and fair reporting, he should have checked his facts and get my side before coming out with the article.

Let me then address the issues leveled against me:

1. Contrary to the allegation that I was inefficient and was causing demoralization among Port of San Fernando employees (resulting to a collection of only P2.1 million from Jan. 1-15, 2005 out of the target of P40 million), the port, in fact, managed to collect P53.142 million as of Jan. 27, 2005.

2. On my suspension, I did not fail the lifestyle check. The case against me was not filed by the Tiglao/Conti group of Malacañang but by the Revenue Integrity Protection System of the Department of Finance.

3. Unlike other Ombudsman cases where evidence was strong, the order suspending me came four months after the case against me was filed, based merely on an anonymous letter.

4. As of today, the six-month maximum suspension period has already expired.

5. On my two real estate properties, they were not declared because they were being processed.

6. I received last Feb. 10 the resolution from the Ombudsman denying the joint resolution to dismiss the case against me. My lawyers are now preparing my motion for reconsideration.

7. On the claims of name-dropping, I never boasted that I was a classmate of President Arroyo. I would not and never do that because the President was three years ahead of me, although we both attended the same school.

9. On the loss of 502 cases of cigarettes, the goods were actually turned over to Customs Collector Juan Tan. In November last year, he ordered the dumping of the goods under the ground because they (having rotten at the Customs building in La Union) were found to be hazardous to health.

I just hope this sufficiently clarifies the issues raised against me. I also appeal to all my detractors to please stop the malicious allegations against my person. We should instead help each other in fulfilling our duties and responsibilities as civil servants.

—ALBERTA DE JOYA IGLESIAS,
collector,
Bureau of Customs,
Collection District I,
Port of San Fernando

MY report was based on Finance Undersecretary Manuel Bonoan's and Customs Collector Juan Tan's letters to the Ombudsman. My mobile phone bill would show that I tried to get the side of Iglesias and her lawyer Edna Batacan, but there was no reply.

After the story came out, I did get to talk to her by phone. She promised to call, but never did. I made several more attempts to talk to her, to no avail.

San Fernando port officials are willing to execute affidavits confirming that Iglesias was claiming to be GMA's "classmate."

—ARMAND N. NOCUM,
PDI reporter

Something wrong

I FIND it annoying and insulting that customers should be required to produce receipts before they are let out by some grocery stores from their premises.

We're talking of purchases which have been scanned, bagged, paid for and checked by grocery employees at the cashier's counter. Surprisingly, this is practiced by the smaller players in the industry, like Pure Gold in Jubiliation, Biñan, Laguna. I'm not sure if Waltermart Sta. Rosa still does it; I have stopped buying from them after seeing them doing this.

Big players like SM, Rustan's and Shopwise don't even bother, so long as your items are in their respective grocery bags.

There must be something wrong with the way a company is doing business if everyone connected with it—employee or customer—is treated with suspicion.

—JENNETTE GALLENERO,
dyenet869@yahoo.com

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44th Annual Convention

February 24-26, 2005 • Philippine International Convention Center

Family Medicine in the 21st Century: Directions & Projections

MESSAGES

I greet the men and women of the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians as you celebrate your 44th Anniversary and Annual Convention.

Your convention theme, "Family Medicine in the 21st Century: Directions & Projections" indicates your collective desire to be abreast of new trends and emerging developments in the medical field. This is a laudable goal of continuing education that ennobles your role as family physicians.

On the occasion of your 44th anniversary, let me take this opportunity to enlist your support in the implementation of our 10-point legacy. I say this with the familiar precept in mind that the family is the foundation of society. Let us help one another safeguard the health of the Filipino family particularly in the marginalized sectors of society. Together, I have no doubt that we can beat the odds.

Mabuhay tayong lahat!

Gloria Arroyo
Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President
Republic of the Philippines

My warmest greetings to the officers and members of the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians on the holding of their 44th Anniversary and Annual Convention with the theme "Family Medicine in the 21st Century: Directions and Projections".

The Department of Health commends you on your anniversary as you continue to provide quality health care and better service to all. For the past years, you have served as one of the beacons in the improvement of our health system.

Let me congratulate all of you in your continuing effort to provide excellence in health care services. I also urge you to remain steadfast and supportive of our government's programs as we embark on improving the lives of all Filipinos.

I wish you success in all your future endeavors.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Manuel M. Dayrit, MD, MSc.
Secretary of Health

I am pleased to convey my warmest greetings and felicitations to all the officers and members of the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians on the occasion of its 44th Anniversary and Annual Convention with the theme: "Family Medicine in the 21st Century: Directions and Projections".

Health experts foresee three major developments in health care which are the disappearance of the hospital walls, the interjection of new sets of social values in the practice of medicine and the decline in medical specialization. The last two of these anticipated developments are, in fact, dawning upon us today and we will be seeing more of the changing health care landscape in the next three to five years. These changing dynamic conditions will be happening at a dizzying pace and unless we hasten to craft the road map to keep our profession not only abreast with the times but relevant, as well in society, we might find ourselves being swept aside and rendered obsolete and overtaken by others, as leaders in the delivery of health care in this country.

Your theme therefore embodies the recognition of the pivotal role physicians, in the field of Family Medicine, play towards the attainment of a strong and healthy nation and in keeping their leadership role in the health care delivery in the country alive.

My best wishes and warmest regards to one and all!

Mabuhay at Maraming Salamat!

Bu C. Castro, MD, LIB, FPSP
President
Philippine Medical Association

With the theme "Family Medicine in the 21st Century: Directions and Projections," the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians welcomes with pride the participants and guests to its 44th Anniversary and Annual Convention.

The many sessions prepared in the convention will set the directions the Academy will take and the projections it hopes to attain in the 21st century. The hardworking Organizing Committee has left no stone unturned in assuring that relevant and important issues are tackled. This year saw the most number of quality researches accomplished by Family Physician members. The participants will have the chance of learning from them as they will be highlighted in appropriate sessions. We are confident that this convention will provide everyone learning experience on a broad range of topics. On top of it all, we shall be renewing ties with friends and meet new ones.

Lastly, our gratitude to our friends and supporters for being with us in all these endeavors.

Again, welcome and mabuhay!!!

Reynaldo A. Olazo, MD
President, PAFP

I am confident that we shall gain initiative awareness regarding the importance of a well-planned health program in response to the challenges of the times from this year's theme- "Family Physicians in the 21st Century: Directions and Projections".

It is incumbent upon ourselves to have the kind of knowledge and attitude that will instill in us a dedicated service to provide our countrymen with quality health care as we join hands and intensify our efforts to help them live a healthy, productive and fulfilling lives as we practice our profession with competence, compassion, ethics and social conscience.

Let us continue to enhance our capabilities as health professionals with the varied opportunities for advancement towards a common goal.

A Warm Mabuhay!

Soraya P. Abubakar, MD
Vice-President, PAFP &
Overall Chair, Organizing Committee
44th Annual Convention

SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM

Plenary Sessions

- Development and Current Status of Family Medicine in the Philippines
- Standards in Family Practice

Simultaneous Sessions

- Updates on Allergic Rhinitis
- Eye Problems in Ageing
- Fundoscopic Examination
- Chronic Diarrhea
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Basic GI Radiology
- Meningitis in Children
- Ergonomics
- CSF Analysis
- Urticaria
- Drug Compounding in Dermatology
- Environmental Considerations in Exercise and Sports Participation
- Behavioral Problems in Children
- Psychosis
- Use of Anti-psychotic Drugs
- Nephrotic Syndrome
- Chronic Renal Failure
- Renal Function Tests Interpretation
- Bleeding Disorders
- Long Term Effect of Treatment for Leukemic Patients
- Blood Transfusion
- Reactive Airway Disease in Children
- Pneumonia in Immunocompetent Adults
- Pulmonary Function Tests Interpretation
- 2004 National Guidelines for Osteoporosis Diagnosis, Prevention and Treatment
- Insulin Therapy in Type 2 DM
- Algorithm in the Management of DKA
- Musculoskeletal Problems in Children
- Arthritides
- How to do Arthrocentesis
- Updates on AIDS
- Sepsis and Septic Shock
- Contraception
- PAP Smear Evaluation for Cervical Cancer
- Strength Training in the Elderlies
- Endocrine Emergencies
- Updates in Advanced Cardiac Life Support
- Parkinson's Disease
- Geriatric Assessment Tools
- Environmental Health
- Copper Toxicity
- Alcohol Withdrawal Syndrome
- Management of Electrolyte Disturbances
- Information Technology for Continuing Professional Development
- Practice Portfolio
- Networking for Social Services
- Child Abuse and Neglect

Industry - Sponsored Symposia

- Managing Your Resources - Enterpreneurship in Difficult Times
- Protect the Diabetic Heart: What CARDS Say?
- Compliance and Persistence: Key to Treating Hypertension to Target
- TB Chemotherapy: Fixed Dose Combination
- The Journey to Heal: Symposium on Compassionate Caring
- Development, Presentation and Treatment of Atherosclerosis: The Role of Amlodipine Besylate
- The Expanding Role of Levofloxacin in Hospital Infections
- Eprosartan: Clinical Evidence Beyond BP Control
- Maximizing Outcomes of Extended Trials in Cardiovascular Disease
- Tracking the Galaxy: The COMETS Study
- Energize for Better Erections, Better Performance
- Updates on Coxibs
- Management of Neuropathic Pain
- Controversies and Updates in the Management of Vulvo Vaginal Candidiasis
- Metabolic Syndrome: Overcoming the Challenge
- Are Betablockers Similar in the Management of Diabetic Hypertensives
- Urinary Tract Infection: A Second Glance
- Rediscovering Vertigo: Restoring Balance in the Elderly
- The Power of Better Blood Pressure Control: The Role of Olmesartan, A New ARB
- A New Forging of Forces
- The Role of Fibrates in the Management of Metabolic Syndrome
- Arthritis
- Fatty Liver
- Advancing the Role of Fluoroquinolones in the Management of Uncomplicated Urinary Tract Infection
- Rational Approach in Respiratory Tract Infection Management

Other Highlights

- Clinicopathologic Conference Grand Finals
- Environmental Project Presentation
- Research Forum
- Poster Exhibits
- Pharmaceutical/Trade Exhibits
- Computer Zoo

SOCIAL PROGRAM

- Opening Ceremonies
(Keynote Speaker: **Cynthia Lazaro-Hipol, MD, MPH**)
- Fellowship Night
- Fun Run
- Closing and Induction Ceremonies
(Guest of Honor: **Bu C. Castro, MD, LIB**)

PRE-CONVENTION ACTIVITIES

February 23, 2005
Orientation Course in Family Medicine I & II
Leadership Dialogue
Quality Assurance Workshop Module
Research Workshop

AWARDEES

Academic
15 New Fellows
35 New Diplomates
205 New Certified Family Physicians

Special Achievement
Concepcion M. Salumbides, MD (*Most Outstanding Family Physician in Community Service*)
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Firm seeks DENR permit amid log ban

BALER, Aurora—A logging firm earlier found to have violated several provisions in its integrated forest management agreement (Ifma) continued to apply for an environmental compliance certificate over an 8,360-hectare forest in Dipaculao town.

This happened even as the total log ban ordered by Environment Secretary Michael Defensor was enforced in Aurora and Quezon.

The INQUIRER saw Toplite Lumber president Johnny Chua accompanying a team from the Environmental Management Bureau here on Thursday.

Chua said he was "just following up" on his company's ECC. He said he submitted the application before four typhoons hit Aurora and Quezon starting November last year.

Former Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez issued the first ECC to Toplite. His successor, Elisea Gozun, cancelled the ECC after a DENR team confirmed Toplite's "rampant illegal logging" and that it held no public consultations among residents of four Dipaculao villages.

Malou Avenido, chief of the EMB's environmental impact assessment (EIA) unit, said she and her team did not visit Toplite's area in view of the recommendation for a new ECC to its operations. By law, the signatory to an ECC is the environment secretary.

"We came to monitor the effect of the typhoons on the [Toplite] area," Avenido told the INQUIRER. Toplite was required to submit an EIA to the EMB as a condition for granting its ECC, documents from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Central Luzon office showed.

Toplite applied for an ECC after the DENR on Sept. 20 last year lifted Gozun's Aug. 1, 2003 suspension order. The firm's Ifma has not been cancelled, though.

Defensor approved the company's reformulated comprehensive development and management plan. He did so after another DENR team reversed the earlier findings.

Toplite, according to the second team, also complied with new requirements. Chua said his company was engaged in "sustainable forest management."

The EMB visit fueled reports that Defensor had lifted the log ban in Aurora, according to Joey Estriber, secretary of the Multi-Sectoral Action Group of Aurora.

Ricardo Calderon, former Aurora DENR chief and now the DENR regional forestry director, said "all permits remained suspended" in Aurora and Quezon and were "subject to review and assessment." Defensor's total log ban order was contained in memoranda dated Dec. 8 and 11, 2004.

Regidor de Leon, DENR regional executive director, said the EMB team has "not coordinated" with his office the inspection of the Toplite area.

In Lucena City, police intercepted an undetermined volume of illegally cut coconut lumber loaded in two trucks and one cargo trailer in a checkpoint in Barangay Bucohan on Feb. 13.

Edilberto de Luna, OIC regional manager of the Philippine Coconut Authority-Southern Tagalog Region, estimated the seized cargoes to be worth close to P500,000 in the underground market in Metro Manila.

A police report said a mobile checkpoint team led by Supt. Concordio Tapulayan Sr., Lucena City Police Office deputy chief, intercepted the trucks at around 3:30 a.m. along the side of the highway while waiting for the go-signal of the "advance team" aboard an owner-type jeep.

All the "hot cargoes" were without the necessary permit to cut, permit to transport and PCA official receipts of payments.

Layers of nipa shingles were placed atop the lumber cargoes and covered with a canvas.

De Luna said the PCA had stopped the processing and issuance of permits starting January.

Police arrested Marlon Fortaleza, 26, driver of the ten-wheeler truck bearing plate WFC-657; Eladio Laylay, 47, driver of another ten-wheeler truck with plate number TLW-160; and Roberto de la Cruz, 43, driver of the trailer truck bearing plate WHB-432. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk and Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Austere centennial alumni homecoming for PMA

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—The centennial reunion of the alumni of the Philippine Military Academy on Saturday lacked the pomp it deserved. Only at least 1,000 alumni showed up at Borromeo Field here, where they marched as cadets.

PMA "Matatag" Class of 1971, which counts embattled Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia as a member, was represented only by five members.

A traditional highlight of the event, the skydiving exhibition, was not performed this year.

Members of PMA "Bigkis-Lahi" Class of 1990 debated loudly whether the austere event was due to the government's fiscal deficit, the Valentine's Day bombings or the military red alert status, or the recent meningococcemia scare in the city.

But to some PMA classes, it provided them the chance to confront their demons.

Air Force Second Lt. Paul Michael Espera, president of PMA "Maliyab" Class of 2004, said the homecoming gave them enough time to talk about their valedictorian, Army Second Lt. Rolly Joaquin, who was deported to the Philippines over a shoplifting case inside the Army Infantry School at Fort Benning in Georgia, where he had been sent to undergo an officer training course.

Military prosecutors claimed that Joaquin tried to switch the price tag of a $12-compact disc with a 50-cent discount tag inside a Fort Benning shopping area.

Maj. Bartolome Bacarro, Army spokesperson and a member of PMA Class 1988, said Joaquin has been detained at Fort Bonifacio, and was awaiting arraignment for a charge of conduct unbecoming that could get him a dismissal from the service.

Army Second Lt. Julie Javier, who ranked fourth in Maliyab's top graduates, said they remained apprehensive about Joaquin's legal battles. She said she flew from the Mindanao battlefield to learn more about her mistah's predicament.

Deputy Director General Ricardo de Leon, PMA Class 1971 president, said they "never even discussed [Garcia]." Garcia is undergoing court martial proceedings for alleged graft while he served as the AFP comptroller.

Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual, AFP spokesperson and a member of PMA "Maharlika" Class of 1984, said military prosecutors had just presented the court vital information about two of Garcia's vehicles that were not identified among his official assets.

De Leon said "Matatag" preferred to send a signal that its active officers would not intervene on behalf of Garcia.

AIR FORCE Colonel Sonny Manalo (left), PMA Class 1987, with his son, Cadet 3rd class John Manalo, who was designated class gidon bearer during its alumni home coming at Fort del Pilar in Baguio City.
TOOTS SOBERANO

The homecoming allowed "Sinagtala" Class of 1986 to grieve for Lt. Col. Dennis Villanueva, who was killed in Sulu on Feb. 10. Villanueva was the first casualty among 10 "Sinagtala" alumni who was assigned to serve at the First Infantry Division there.

"It's okay if you die a lieutenant or a captain. But he had to die when he achieved the rank of lieutenant colonel. His wife [was] taking it hard," said Lt. Col. Bismarck Soliba, a classmate of Villanueva's.

The homecoming was more beneficial to the more celebrated PMA "Marilag" Class of 1995, whose members were implicated in the failed Oakwood mutiny in 2003. The mutiny made "Marilag" members, Lt. Senior Grade Antonio Trillanes IV and Army Capt. Gerardo Gambala household names.

As junior hosts of the centennial reunion, "Marilag" was represented by one of the largest alumni contingent here.

"We have outgrown [the notoriety] of the Magdalo (the name of the group of junior officers who took over a hotel in 2003 to express dismay at President Macapagal-Arroyo)," one of the 1995 alumni members said.

Lt. Alvin Lopez, PMA spokesperson, said ongoing military operations against the MNLF were one of the reasons for the low attendance. *Vincent Cabreza, with a report from Jiezl Reotutar and Benjie Fernandez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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MX-JD3	2400W/DVD AUDIO PLAYBACK/DTS/DOLBY DIGITAL RHYTHMAX	4,320	2,619
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"That in all things God may be glorified."

No need for loyalty check among MNLF fighters—Southcom chief

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Southern Command chief Lt. General Alberto Braganza said there was no need to conduct loyalty check among former Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) fighters who have been integrated into the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

"We are not conducting any loyalty check. They (MNLF integrees) are very loyal to us. They are our gallant soldiers, brave soldiers fighting out there with our AFP soldiers," Braganza told reporters on Saturday afternoon after the ecumenical services at Camp Navarro Hospital inside Southern Command headquarters.

The Southcom chief was referring to the 510 integrees who are now enlisted personnel of the AFP, 12 of who are junior officers assigned in Sulu.

"For all intents and purposes, they are now members of AFP. That's one of the success stories of the MNLF-GRP peace accord," Braganza said.

A final peace agreement between the MNLF and the government was signed in 1996.

Army spokesperson Maj. Bartolome Vicente Bacarro told the INQUIRER that at the first burst of fire in Panamao, Sulu, "the first casualty was an integree."

The Army lost three integrees while eight others were wounded in the Sulu fighting.

Capt. Sirajan Abe, an integree who handles the operational matters in Sulu as a deputy personnel of the Joint Task Force Comet, said he was "proud of the trust and importance" his superiors show him.

"My loyalty is to the AFP, to the people and to our country," Abe said.

"We are not going to sacrifice ourselves if we are not loyal. We could always turn our backs, but with our sincerity to the oath and the importance they show to us, it's not that easy," Abe added.

But Abe said they should no longer be called integrees, saying "we are already soldiers of the AFP." *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Solcom chief says Army to free Mindoro from NPA rebels soon

LUCENA CITY—Despite the death of two Army soldiers and the wounding of three others in an ambush by communist rebels in Mindoro on Friday, the commander of the Southern Luzon Command said the island would soon be free from the clutches of the New People's Army.

"We will clear Mindoro very soon. It's just a matter of time," Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay, Solcom chief, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Cabuay based his assessment on the recent admissions of NPA leaders in the area that the insurgents were now maintaining only two guerrilla fronts from the previous four active guerrilla units due to intense counter-insurgency campaign in the island.

Cabuay said that on Saturday, one NPA guerrilla was killed during a 15-minute encounter between government troops and communist guerrillas in the vicinity of Barangay Poypoy, Calintaan, Occidental Mindoro.

No casualty was reported on the government side.

Cabuay said he ordered his men in Mindoro to flush out the remaining NPA rebels from the hinterlands. He added that the rebels have only two options left: Either to fight or surrender to the government.

"But I advise them to just lay down their arms. My men will welcome them with open arms and help them return to normal lives with their families," Cabuay said.

On Feb. 15, at least three NPA rebels were killed in an encounter with an Air Force combat group in Calatagan, Batangas. Two more rebels were also captured after the battle. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Officials set up safety measures for Makiling

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna—In an effort to avert accidents, officials of this town and the University of the Philippines recommended the monitoring of entry points to Mount Makiling, a favorite mountaineering destination south of Manila.

Dr. Edwino Fernando, head of the Makiling Center for Mountain Ecosystems (MCME), said he met with Mayor Edna Sanchez of Sto. Tomas, Batangas on Feb. 7, a day after the death in an accident of mountaineer Rimando Pimentel, who entered the mountain through Barangay San Bartolome, Sto. Tomas

The meeting, Fernando said, was part of the annual preparation for the "Make it Makiling" activity, a yearly project sponsored by the MCME and the municipality of Los Baños.

The formation of a monitoring team would be similar to what they had already done in the forestry trail of Makiling in the UPLB where all visitors entering the mountain premises had to first register and secure clearance, Fernando said.

Makiling draws over 10,000 climbers yearly, with an average of 200 on weekends, said Robbie Cereno, head of MCME's Ecotourism and Park Management Program.

Los Baños Mayor Caesar Perez said the formation of monitoring teams and recruitment of volunteers from Sto. Tomas should be considered urgent since February was the start of the season for climbing Makiling.

"Based on our experience, the police and the local government can have a better grasp of the situation in the area if we have [a] volunteers corps. The team stationed at the entry points could also help us monitor how many persons are in the area at a given time," Perez told the INQUIRER.

Aside from acting as search and rescue units, he said the volunteer teams had also helped them ensure that no bladed weapons, alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs are brought into the area.

He said the volunteer corps, most of them forestry students from the UPLB, helped educate the mountaineers about forest conservation and cleaning up the area.

Cereno said the setting up of monitoring teams in Sto. Tomas was important since there were five major entry points to Makiling in the town.

Los Baños has only one established entry point where visitors are asked to register, he said.

Cereno said over 150 mountaineers had so far registered at the forestry trail of Makiling as of the first week of February.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

2 die in Mindoro plane crash

By Madonna T. Virola and Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CITY OF CALAPAN—A two-seat training plane crashed on a peanut plantation in Sitio Longos, Barangay Tangal, Lubang, Occidental Mindoro at about 6:15 a.m. on Saturday, killing its pilot and his student, police said.

Chief Supt. Alejandro Lapinid, Mimaropa police director, identified the fatalities as Air Force Capt. Nestor Mayo and his student, Timothy de Guzman.

The two were on board the Piper Tomahawk, with body No. RPC-1655, when it crashed on the northern part of Mindoro Island, he said.

The aircraft belonged to the Airlink International Aviation School, which is based in Nichols Air Base in Pasay City.

Lubang Councilor Jaime Tardio said the bodies of Mayo and De Guzman were airlifted to Manila by Airlink officials at about 8 a.m. that same day.

Tardio said he was feeding his pigs when he heard the sputtering engine of the airplane and saw it suddenly drop and crash near a residential area within the peanut plantation of Ricardo Rojas.

He said the plane appeared to have exploded as it was a total wreck when found. Aviation fuel spilled by the plane caused damage to the farm.

"The residents have realized that a plane could crash on their houses anytime," he said as he recounted their residents.

Tardio said he was at the scene of the crash at about 6:20 a.m., about 400 meters from his house.

"The bodies of the pilot and passengers were badly mangled," he said.

ROUNDUP

Truck falls into ravine

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Seven members of the Marines Battalion Landing Team-2 and one official were hurt when their M-35 truck fell into a ravine in Barangay Luzviminda Zigzag, 34 km from the city proper. Lt. Col. Bernardo Ferrer, MBLT-2 battalion commander, identified the official as Lt. Henry Bucasas. He said the truck was on its way back to Marine headquarters in Bataraza town after delivering supplies to units there and in Barangay Abo-abo, Española, when it lost its brakes at around 2:25 a.m., causing it to fall.

Geraldford P. Ticke, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Fire razes 200 houses

PAGADIAN CITY—At least 200 houses were destroyed when a fire hit a slum area here at around 6:45 p.m. on Feb. 11. The Bureau of Fire Protection said the fire struck Purok Campo Islam in San Pedro District and caused damage to property estimated at P23 million. No one was hurt. Mayor Samuel Co declared the area under a state of calamity and released P500,000 in calamity funds for the victims. Chief Insp. Robert Roy Bahian, city police chief, dismissed rumors the fire was the work of terrorists.

Michael F. Sarcauga, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Training for Dumagats

LUCENA CITY—At least six Dumagat leaders from General Nakar town in northern Quezon have finished a one-week course on primary health care given by a medical team based in the Camp Nakar station hospital here. Maj. Jose Broso, spokesperson of the Southern Luzon Command, said among the skills taught the Dumagats were sanitation, first aid treatment, blood pressure checking, immunization and infant care. The Solcom also donated medical equipment, clothes, canned goods and seedlings to the tribe.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Indian nabbed for shabu

BAGABAG, Nueva Vizcaya—Police arrested an Indian in Barangay Murong here on Wednesday for allegedly selling shabu. Police said Amarjit Singh, 40, yielded 5 milligrams of shabu (methampethamine hydrochloride) contained in two plastic sachets. Singh, reports said, had been under surveillance for alleged illegal drug trafficking in the province.

Ben Moses Ebreo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

3 killed in road mishap

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Three people were killed on Tuesday when the Toyota Tamaraw FX van they were riding in turned turtle at Km 80 or past the Angeles City interchange of the North Luzon Expressway. A report from the NLEx traffic control center identified the fatalities as Victoria and Arcadio Ferrer, passengers, and Ireneo Navarro Iglesias Jr., the driver. The van was cruising along the north lane when it tumbled several times, the report said, citing accounts of witnesses. It rolled on a ditch near the south lane.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Anti-drought plans

LEGAZPI CITY—The Regional Disaster and Coordinating Council asked all local government units to submit action plans in preparation for the El Niño phenomenon that might start next month and last until May of this year. The units were told to create a task force that would handle preparations, such as water distribution, curtail logging activities in watersheds, and monitor water levels of reservoirs and dams. The regional Department of Agriculture has also encouraged farmers to plant vegetables and other crops fit for the season.

Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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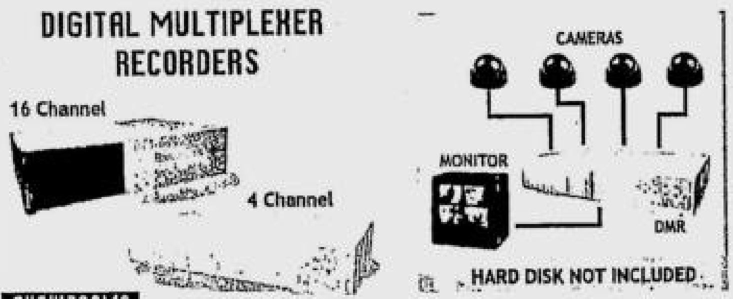

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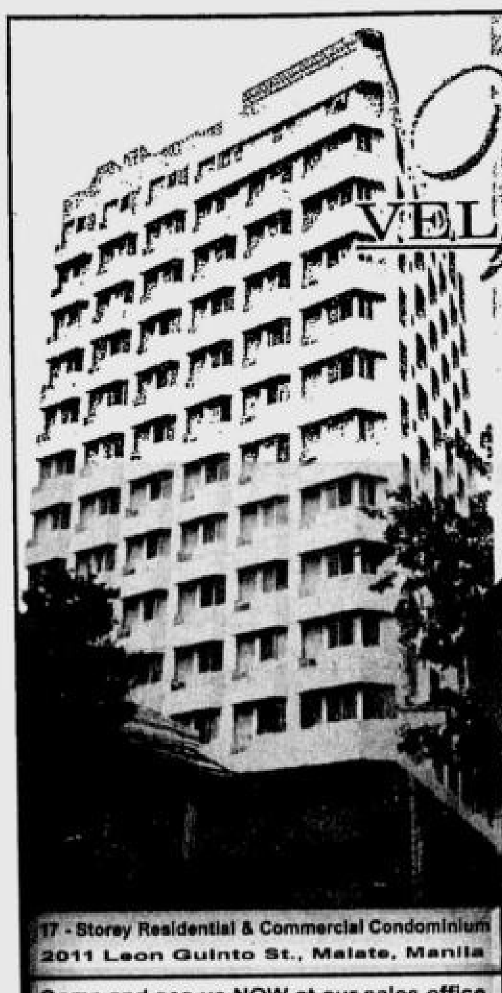

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Farmers seek protection in contested sugar estate

By Romy G. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—A group of farmer beneficiaries has been camping in front of the Department of Land Reform provincial office to demand that a police or an Army detachment be set up in the hotly contested sugar estate of former Sen. Rene Espina in Barangay Polo, Tanjay City, 30 km north of here.

Elias Ramos, chair of the Polo Plantation Agrarian Reform Multi-Purpose Cooperative (Poparmuco), said his group would not lift their "*kampong bayan* (people's camp)," until its request was granted.

They wanted a detachment placed in the area because the plantation's blue guards and goons have been harassing them since June last year, he charged.

"We prefer to die of hunger in front of the DLR office than die in the hands of the security personnel and goons of the plantation," said Demetrio Balbuena, a director of Poparmuco.

At least 20 farmers took turns in manning the campsite, which was put up early February.

Balbuena said 15 cases of harassment, grave threats, qualified theft, coercion, obstruction of justice and other charges had been filed before the Tanjay City Prosecutor's office but not one had been resolved.

Carmita Remollo, plantation manager, denied the charges of harassment, claiming that it was Ramos' group that had been harassing employees and security guards.

She said the string of cases filed by the "self-confessed" beneficiaries against the plantation management and security personnel was another form of harassment.

But Remollo said the management was amenable to the idea of putting up a detachment in the plantation.

She said the management was even the first to request for police personnel to maintain peace and order, especially because unidentified persons allegedly wanted to enter the plantation.

More than 200 beneficiaries were installed at the 410-hectare sugar plantation on Feb. 25, 2004 amid strong opposition from the landowner and after 13 years of waiting on the part of the beneficiaries.

Willy Barba, one of the beneficiaries, said that after they were installed, they immediately cultivated the land, took care of sugarcane crops, and planted *palay*.

When the plants had grown, the harassment began, he noted.

Barba recalled that last September, the security guards stopped them from harvesting *palay*. The following day, management personnel harvested the *palay*, he said.

"We have failed to partake [of] even just a single grain of the rice we planted. It's painful because aside from the efforts we spent we also borrowed money for it," Barba said.

Balbuena accused the local police of favoring management because they did not act on their complaint of harassment by the security guards.

Remollo said the beneficiaries had no right to claim ownership of the land because the Court of Appeals had yet to resolve Espina's petition to stop the DLR from placing the plantation under agrarian reform coverage.

Espina earlier said that the estate had been declared an economic zone by the city government.

Romeo Binasahan, comprehensive agrarian reform officer in Negros Oriental, said the DLR provincial officials had asked the provincial police to grant the request of the beneficiaries.

Geohazards delay relocation of victims

MARIA AURORA, Aurora—A total of 130 families in Barangay Villa here, who were displaced by a series of landslides in November and December last year will have to wait several more weeks to be transferred to a safe place.

On Thursday, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau in Central Luzon said their 4.2-hectare relocation site, also intended as Villa's new barangay center, was prone to landslides and earthquakes.

The site in Sitio Dimani sits within the Sierra Madre's Caraballo formation near the Villa Aurora fault, it said.

Rocks, soil and logs unleashed by heavy rains during Typhoons "Unding," "Violeta" and "Yoyong" and Tropical Depression "Winnie" had buried Villa's three of five sitios and the Cabatangan River near Dimani.

This indicates the area's susceptibility to landslides, the MGB said.

"The present relocation site may be suitable if proper engineering measures [are] undertaken. However, these measures are costly and will not entirely eliminate the general nature of the area, which is prone to geologic hazards," geologists Vincent Lunar and Bryan Noel Mallare reported.

The local government of Maria Aurora may look for another relocation site, they suggested.

Arnulfo Cabantog, MGB regional director, endorsed the team's report to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which oversees the 6,000-hectare Aurora Memorial National Park where Barangay Villa is situated.

Rogelio Trinidad, chief of the DENR's protected area, wildlife and coastal zone management sector, relayed the MGB's advisory on Thursday to Villa barangay chair Henry Padilla.

A consultation is set for Feb. 26 with the residents and the organizations helping in their rehabilitation plan, Padilla said.

The GMA Kapuso Foundation is building an elementary school at the site for 200 pupils.

The barangay hall and health center, the DENR's wildlife park and the Villa bridge of the Department of Public Works and Highway were destroyed by the landslides on Nov. 30 last year.

"If we were not awake and alert, we would have all been killed," said Letty Fernan, the village council's secretary. Villa has a population of more than 700.

Thirteen people, mostly men, died in the landslides. They included forester Carlos Palacios. Three DPWH personnel drowned when rampaging waters swept them.

Gov. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo, after being informed of the risks in Dimani, urged the MGB and the DENR to look for another relocation site. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

THIS 40-year-old female Olive Ridley marine turtle was accidentally caught by a gillnet on Friday but was released to the sea on Saturday. JUAN ESCANDOR, PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Rare marine turtle freed

By Juan Escandor Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

NAGA CITY—A fisherman turned over on Saturday a 40-year-old female Olive Ridley marine turtle to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources after it was accidentally caught by a gillnet on Friday.

Tolentino Alonzo, of Barangay Tandoc, Siruma, Camarines Sur, decided to give to authorities the meter-long and half-meter-wide turtle upon the advice of village authorities.

The DENR is the government agency mandated under the Philippine Wildlife Act to monitor and protect two endangered marine wildlife species, including four species of marine turtles and the *dugong*.

Myrna Baylon, chief of the protected area wildlife research of the DENR, said the captured Olive Ridley was in "a very stressed condition" when her office received it for documentation.

The creature was released immediately in to the San Miguel Bay after DENR and Department of Agriculture employees attached a tag to it, bearing its identity and date of capture.

She said the turtle, with seven pairs of scale shells from head to rear, is considered the rarest among the endangered marine turtle species listed under the wildlife law.

She said the DENR was also tasked with documenting, monitoring and protecting other endangered turtles—the Green Sea, the Leather Back and Loggerhead.

San Miguel Bay is believed to be a destination of the four turtle species. Several cases of accidental capture have been documented.

Last year alone, the DENR received, for documentation and release 11 marine turtles in Calabanga, Camarines Sur, one of the five coastal towns along the bay.

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MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

3 BFAR facilities opened to push aquaculture

DAGUPAN CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo and Speaker Jose de Venecia inaugurated on Saturday three facilities of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources research center here to push the aquaculture industry.

The President opened the Buhay Isdaan or live fish market, the aquarium building and a research facility for *tilapia* propagation at the BFAR center.

The Buhay Isdaan, established through De Venecia's financial support, is expected to benefit fishermen and fish breeders because the facility will serve as a trading center for various fish species (breeders and fingerlings for food and farming).

High value species

The facility, according to the BFAR, will enhance the production and trade of ornamental fish and other high value aquaculture species by providing fishermen and traders a modern market place.

De Venecia said the Buhay Isdaan was the first live fish market in the country and would benefit more than 240 fish farmers or traders in a month.

Another facility, the Molobicus Building, will house the offices of French and Filipino scientists working on the development of salinity-tolerant *tilapia*.

The project, which began in 1998, is supported by the Center of the International Cooperation for Research and Development in Agricultural Science (Cirad), a French scientific organization specializing in agricultural research.

Westly Rosario, BFAR center chief, said *tilapia* was primarily cultured in freshwater ponds, and the development of the saline *tilapia* would improve production in more than 240,000 hectares of brackish water ponds.

Exotic fish

The third facility inaugurated by Ms Arroyo was the aquarium building where large aquariums that showcase rare and exotic fish species in the country.

One of its attractions is the *ludong* (*Cestreus plicatilis*), the only live captive species in the Philippines.

Sometimes called the "President's fish" because it is sold for P2,500 a kilogram, the *ludong* grows upstream and migrates downstream to spawn.

BFAR officials also presented to Ms Arroyo a commemorative plaque naming the Philippine strain of giant fresh water prawn (*Macrobrachium rosenbergii*, locally known as *ulang*) as "Hipon ni Gloria." *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Fish sanctuary damaged by coco oil slick, study says

SINACABAN, Misamis Occidental—Laboratory tests conducted at the University of San Carlos in Cebu City have identified the pollutant that damaged a 90-hectare fish sanctuary in this fishing town as waste from the processing of coconut oil.

Misamis Occidental Gov. Loreto Ocampos disclosed this finding as the pollution continued to engulf the fish sanctuary for over two weeks now.

Presence of the coconut oil slick persisted in about ten hectares of the sanctuary, said Ocampos, who has been regularly monitoring the area.

The pollution has resulted in the death of fish and two of the four dolphins under the care of the Marine Rescue and Rehabilitation Center of the Misamis Occidental Aquamarine Park, which is near the sanctuary.

Oil started to contaminate the sanctuary early morning of Jan. 23, immediately killing one dolphin that had been recuperating from wounds. Several days later, another dolphin died.

In a press statement, the Provincial Coastal Resource Management Council (PCRM) said "initial investigation showed a high possibility that [the] oil waste comes from either or both Hebron Oil Mill in Ozamiz City and Jimenez Oil Mill Inc. (Jomi) in Jimenez (town)."

Jomi, now Third Millenium Oil Mill, is the coconut processing plant nearest the polluted area.

PCRM noted that Hebron had been reported to be regularly dumping oil waste in a river near its plant, although the complaints had not been acted upon.

Petitioned

Last year, seaweed growers in Ozamiz City petitioned for a thorough investigation of the company's waste disposal practice, believing that this has something to do with the outbreak of white rot disease affecting seaweed production. No conclusive evidence has supported this contention, however.

Sr. Ester Paredes, coordinator of the environment group Save Nature Society, stressed the importance of constant monitoring of water quality in the vicinity of possible water pollution sources.

The PCRM was worried that if polluters could just walk away after damage was done, the province's marine resources were in danger of another pollution attack. *Ryan Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Boy in Palawan bus fire continues to fight for life

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Cristo Condesa, 5, who survived the fire that hit a Puerto Royale Express bus in Barangay Taritien, Narra on Feb. 17, is still in unstable condition and needs help, according to the Ospital ng Palawan officer-in-charge Dr. Glorifino Juan Jr.

Condesa was supposed to be airlifted to Manila on Saturday, but Juan said he might not be able to make it because of his condition.

His mother Lilia, 32, and 8-year-old sister Clarissa died inside the bus holding on to each other.

Lilia's sister Nora said the three had just boarded the bus some 500 meters from the incident on their way to Barangay Labog in Española town when the bus caught fire.

The fifth fatality was identified by her husband yesterday as Jocelyn Rayosa, 22, of Barangay Sumbiling, Bataraza.

Ryan Rayosa said Jocelyn went to Puerto Princesa to buy things for their baby's birthday on Feb. 29. The baby survived the accident. *Geraldford Ticke, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Blast witness an impostor, says officer

From page A1

from the so-called witness.

Asked if the guy was a bogus witness, he told the INQUIRER: "We're still checking that as well as his background and the things that he's been saying."

The walk-in "witness" surfaced last week, identifying the perpetrators of the Makati blast that killed four people and wounded more than 100.

He even mentioned the purported location of the bombers, prompting the National Capital Region Police Office to launch conduct surveillance operations.

Even NCRPO chief Director Avelino Razon Jr. told reporters on camera that his men were "very close" to arresting the bombers, based on information from the unidentified witness, described as a male Christian and in his 30s.

Asked at that time if it was possible that the man was a fake, Razon had said the man "knew what he's talking about."

Razon also said then that the man had even been interviewed by no less than Aglipay himself and by intelligence operatives.

Razon stands by witness

Curiously, the PNP has yet to make any arrest despite the supposedly credible details provided by the self-proclaimed witness.

Razon yesterday stood by the man, maintaining that he was no impostor.

"He's credible," Razon told the INQUIRER. "Let's just wait for the result of the operation. So far, there's no significant development yet."

A senior intelligence officer said the investigation had not really hit a snag.

"The intelligence community is pursuing a different group and we hope to get its members soon," the officer said, adding that the suspects were known Abu Sayyaf operatives.

Expected to help the investigation is the forensic examination being conducted by the. PNP Crime Laboratory on the bombs used in Makati, General Santos, and Davao on Feb. 14.

Experts have determined that all the bombs were made of TNT, but the most important result of the forensic tests would involve the "lot number" of the explosives, said Chief Supt. Ernesto Belen, Crime Laboratory director.

Evidence washed out?

Belen was referring to what he said was "an alpha-numeric code" printed on every bomb.

"The lot number would determine the manufacturer of the bombs and where they are usually available," he explained.

But one problem is facing investigators: Firemen have virtually washed the bus bombed in Makati and there's hardly any debris of value left for investigators, Belen said.

In Cebu City, police have tightened security at the international airport, vital installations, commercial centers and most public places amid a bomb scare spread through text messages.

Cruel joke

The text messages warned of possible bombings in malls, churches and public places.

"I'm hoping that it's just a hoax but we took that threat very seriously," said Chief Supt. Eduardo Gador, director of the Police Regional Office in Central Visayas.

One of the text messages allegedly came from the 303rd Air Force Intelligence Group. It read: "Info from 303rd Air Force Intelligence Group. Possible bombing here in Cebu today or tomorrow. Avoid malls, churches and public places. Confirmed by MIG [Military Intelligence Group]."

Another message read: "Please minimize your mall visits starting today. Terrorists are planting bombs in crowded places. Our country is on red alert. Please pass to friends. *Sa motel na lang kayo* [Just stay in motels]!" Gador said the Philippine Air Force had denied that any of the messages came from them. *With a report from Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Pinay entertainers try to beat Japan . . .

From page A1

ment Administration.

Like hundreds of other entertainers, she is racing against time to beat the March 15 implementation of Japan's new immigration policy imposing tough requirements for the issuance of a visa.

"I might not make it [to Japan before that date]," said Justine (not her real name), 25, as she sat anxiously behind a row of other entertainers at the lobby of the POEA building on Edsa, Mandaluyong City, waiting for her name to be called.

That day, the POEA's overseas performing artist center was abuzz with activity and the office teemed with entertainers who were either renewing their artist accreditation cards (AACs) or waiting for their release, as in Justine's case.

"I've been booked, but I still don't know when I can leave or if I'll be able to leave," said Justine, who has been an entertainer in Japan since 1999. She was unable to hide her anxiety over the new policy adopted as part of Japan's clampdown on human trafficking.

Japan has assured local officials that the policy would not be enforced retroactively, one of the few concessions wrangled by the Philippine government after getting rebuffed in its requests for a moratorium.

Under this arrangement, those who applied by March 14 will be processed based on the old guidelines, which merely require the presentation of the AAC for the issuance of an entertainer's visa.

But beyond that date, new applicants had to toe the line and present proof of a two-year training or two-year experience in the performing arts at a foreign country before they're issued a visa.

"That's quite a tough requirement. Why are they making life harder for us?" rued Justine, who admitted to getting a crash course in dancing and entertaining guests before she was deployed to Japan five years ago.

"But if that's the new rule, then I have no choice but to comply," added this education undergraduate, who is sending two younger siblings to college in Olongapo City from her monthly earnings.

Otherwise, she'll have to find a job elsewhere.

No surge in applications

The policy, approved after Japan was included in the US state department's watch list of human traffickers, is expected to cut down the 80,000 Filipino entertainers working there every year, and slash their foreign exchange remittances.

Surprisingly, the crowd of entertainers who troop to the POEA building every day has not doubled although there's less than a month to go before the policy takes effect.

"It's the same volume every day. The licensing agencies don't expect any surge in the applications. There's no movement in the market; there are no new job orders," POEA Administrator Teresita Baldoz said in a phone interview.

"But I'm closely in touch with them (agencies) just in case there are any changes in the volume. If that happens, we'll be ready to serve them (entertainers)," she said.

Stumped

The POEA has issued 10,000 AACs, mostly to entertainers bound for Japan, since September last year, when the artist record book (ARB) was scrapped by the government following charges that it could be forged.

The AAC is a government document certifying an entertainer's skills in the performing arts. Unlike its predecessor, the ARB, the AAC is biometrically enabled and is effective for 10 years.

The government, which is bracing for the March 15 implementation and which continues to send missions to Japan to lobby for a reconsideration, remained stumped on how Japan plans to enforce the policy.

"We still don't know how they will implement it. There are no details. In 1994, everything was clear with the ARB. Now, we don't know how they will do it; we don't know the implementing guidelines," Baldoz said.

Japan will be sending a team to Manila "to thresh out the details" with a newly created special task force, headed by Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas and tasked with drawing up measures to minimize the impact of the policy.

"We've been told that they might send a technical team to have some contact with the task force," Baldoz said.

NOTICE OF EXTENSION OF THE TENDER OFFER PERIOD OF GLOBE TELECOM INC.

This notice makes reference to Globe's previously announced offer to purchase one share for every fifteen shares (Tender Offer) of the outstanding common stock of Globe (par value P50) from all shareholders of record as of 10 February 2005, at a price of P950 per share.

Due to the declaration of 25 February 2005 as a public non-working holiday, Globe hereby gives notice of extension of the Tender Offer Period by one business day from 2 March 2005 to 3 March 2005. Stockholders may thus tender shares to the designated Depositary, ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Inc., until **3:00 pm of March 3, 2005**. All other provisions of the Terms and Conditions distributed to Globe Telecom, Inc. shareholders remain unchanged.

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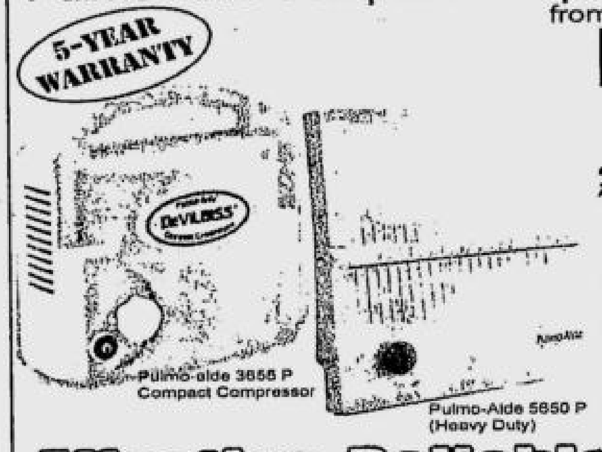
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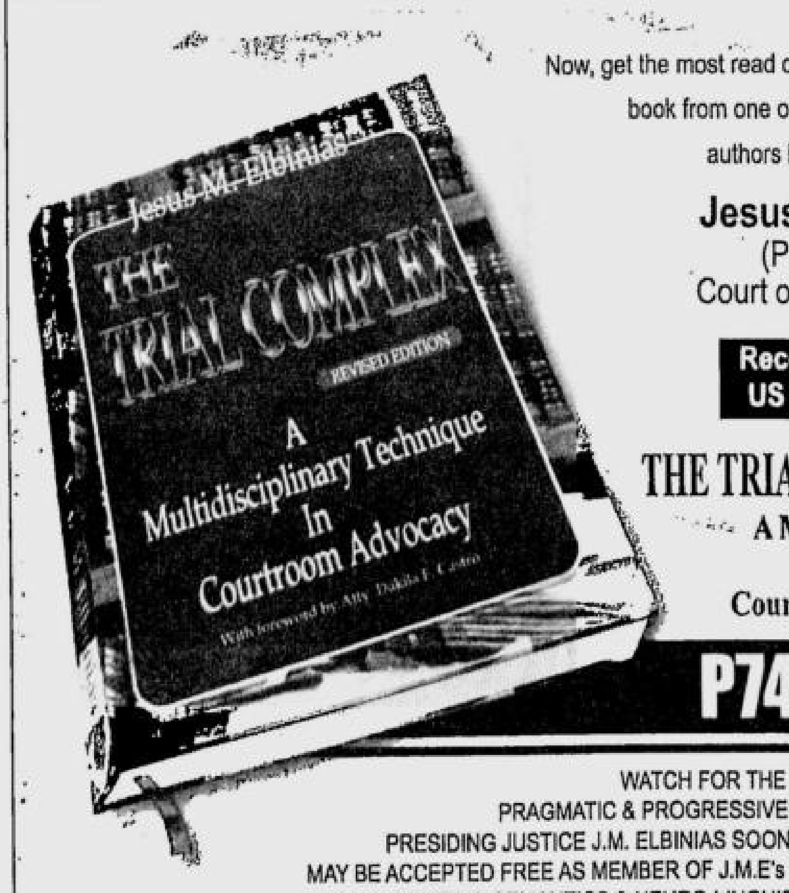

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2nd public attorney ambushed, wounded

By Luige A. del Puerto

A PUBLIC attorney was ambushed and wounded Saturday night in Antipolo City, the second since the killing of another government lawyer in Las Piñas on Feb. 9.

Public Attorney's Office lawyer Armando Cabalida of Caloocan City was the fortunate one, so far. His companion, ex-Army Cpl. Robert Neyra, 35, was killed on the spot.

Antipolo police chief Supt. Primitivo Tabujara said a policeman who was acting as a backup to Cabalida was able to respond and drive away the attackers.

The policeman-backup, SPO3 Raymundo Listangco of the Caloocan police, was unhurt.

Yesterday, the police detained nine men, three of them security guards who were in a house across from the crime scene.

"We want to make sure we get information on this one," the city police chief said.

There were foot marks on the banks that lead up to the house, he said.

"They claimed to have heard the shots, but said they did not see what happened," the police official said.

The police are eyeing two motives in the assassination attempt. One is a possible land dispute. The PAO lawyer has a land in Busu-Buso, Antipolo City. The second is a case the lawyer might be handling.

The police said the victims were traveling in Sitio Calumpang, Barangay San Jose, at about 11 p.m. when someone called Cabalida on his satellite phone.

To get a clearer signal, the two pulled over the road, according to Tabujara.

Suddenly, a group of men emerged and peppered them with bullets.

Tabalida suffered from at least five gunshot wounds. He is now under observation at the Quirino Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City, the police said.

On Feb. 9, Atty. Teresita Vidamo, Las Piñas City PAO chief, was also attacked and slain outside her home in Casimiro Village, Pulang Lupa. Probers are eyeing a land dispute in the killing.

WATER SUPPLY ADVISORY NO. 2
FOR WEST ZONE CUSTOMERS

The National Water Resource Board has continued the reduction of the raw water supply from Angat Dam to Metro-Manila that it implemented January 2005 due to the diminishing level of the Angat Dam, the continued blockage of the Umiray Tunnel which used to provide an additional 20 % to the domestic water supply, and the absence of rainfall due to the current El Nino phenomenon.

The reduced raw water supply, in turn, has severely affected the output of Maynilad's La Mesa Treatment Plants. As of February 17, 2005, the average output of the treatment plants has gone down from the normal 2265 million liters a day (MLD) to a low of 1935 MLD, a reduction of 330 MLD.

As has been stated in our first advisory, this development has reduced the water supply to elevated portions of the West Zone concession, including the following areas:

1. **Quezon City**: Toro Hills, Project 8; San Francisco Del Monte; and Commonwealth District
2. **Caloocan City**: Sta. Quiteria, Baesa, portion of Bagong Barrio, UE Subd., University Hills Subd., portion of East Grace Park, West Grace Park (DM Compound, PNR Compound, Heroes del 96), and Barangays Llano, Kaybiga, Bagbaguin and Deparo
3. **Valenzuela City**: Gen. T. De Leon, Upper Marulas, Tullahan, and Arkong Bato
4. **Malabon**: Part of Araneta Subd., Baong Lote, Upper Portion of Potrero, UE Subd., and Barangays Tugatog, Tinejeros, Santolan, Catmon, Tonsuya, Longos, Tanong, San Roque, Ibaba and part of Barangays Muzon and Bayan Bayanan;
5. **Navotas**: Tanza, Dagat-Dagatan Area, Barangays Tangos and San Roque and portions of Barangays Daang Hari and Bankulasi
6. **Manila**: Bacood, Sta. Mesa, Sta. Cruz District, portion of Binondo, and Gagalangin and Tondo Foreshore, Tondo District
7. **Paranaque City**: San Antonio Valleys 10 and 11, Marcelo Green Village Phases 1, 2, 3, 5 and 8, Justina Subd., Vitalez Compound, UPS 2 and 5, Camilla Townhomes, elevated portions of Better Living (Annexes 16, 18, 29, 32, 22 and Section 3), Don Agido Bernabe Subd. and Remanville Subd
8. **Las Pinas City**: Lozada St., St. Joseph Subdivision, Martinville, Pulang Lupa Dos, Dona Macaria, Pamplona, Manuyo Dos
9. **Cavite**: Palico, Imus

Maynilad is thus further intensifying its measures to allow it to mitigate the effects of the drastically reduced water supply. These include leak repairs, disconnection of illegal connections and replacement of old pipes and facilities, and the adjustment of valves to maximize the distribution of water to affected areas. Maynilad has also fielded more tankers to attend to the needs of affected residents.

These are apart from the on-going water recovery projects aimed at delivering the recovered water to underserved or unserved areas. These projects include the just-finished Tondo Foreshore F-1 Zone Pilot Project, the on-going Dagat-Dagatan Pipe Replacement Project in Caloocan City (and eventually Malabon and Navotas) and the Water Supply Improvement Project in Barangays Baclaran and Tambo in Paranaque City.

In view of this situation, we advise our customers to conserve water and not to use booster pumps directly connected to our mainlines.

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YOUNG participants to the children's art contest at the Arroceros Forest Park put the final touches on their masterpieces as they engage in a friendly competition aimed at raising awareness about the park, considered the last patch of forest green in the bustling city.
ERIC ARAZAS

Art tilt brings color to Manila forest park

By Tarra V. Quismundo

A PATCH of forest cover, now a rarity in a bustling urban landscape, yet again inspired creativity—this time through the hands and minds of the young.

The Arroceros Forest Park in Ermita, Manila, considered the last lung of the city and home to some 8,000 trees and at least nine species of birds, was the subject of more than 80 young artists from Metro Manila who took part in the park's first on-the-spot art competition yesterday.

"This art competition aims to bring kids to appreciate nature and to develop their awareness of the arts and culture," said Regina Paterno, president of Winner Foundation, the environmental group acting as the park's caretaker since 1994.

'God's Handiwork'

Winner organized yesterday's art competition, called "God's Handiwork—The Beauty of Nature." The gathering drew a larger than usual Sunday crowd to the park, where professional artists hold regular weekly art sessions.

The competition, sponsored by Manulife Philippines, Inc., brought together artists aged 4 to 12 years from public and private elementary schools around the metropolis.

Twenty-three participants signed up for the 4 to 7 years old category, while 61 joined the 8 to 12 years old grouping.

"We realize that the children are the most important, because they will be the ones to carry on what we are doing," Paterno told the INQUIRER.

Children's turn

"It's been seven months now that artists have been coming here to paint. Now we want to expose the children to the visual arts," she added.

By early afternoon, judges picked the three best works in each category through a criteria that awarded 50 points for originality, and another 50 for "freedom of expression."

Awarded first place and a cash prize of P3,000 in the first category was Barbara David, 5. Six-year-old Gian Franco Dinapo was adjudged second and given a cash prize of P2,000, while Herley Oliveros, 7, placed third with a prize of P1,000.

Winners, too

In the second category, the work of Michelle Pingal, an 11-year-old student from Aurora Quezon Elementary School, bested 60 other entries, winning P3,000. Dhalaine Bautista, 11, of Guadalupe Viejo Elementary School, took home P2,000 for placing second. Named third placer and awarded P1,000 was Regin Rex Lenaroz, 12, from Makati Elementary School.

Even though she did not place in the contest, Clarissa Guinto, 12, sixth grader at the F. Maria Guerrero Elementary School in Paco, took home a worthwhile lesson from joining the competition.

"We need to be one in taking care of nature, because it's where we get what we need," said Guinto in Filipino.

Visions in color

Through her eyes, the forest park was seen in lively colors of orange, green, yellow and blue.

Her work placed a heart-shaped line of trees in the center of her "canvas," an illustration board. Around the heart were drawn faceless people, whom she said represented those who should be protecting the environment.

Paterno said the competition was only the beginning of a series of activities meant to draw crowds to the park, a disputed 2.1-hectare property, which the Manila City Government is also laying claim to.

"If there were many people aware of its existence, maybe the city government will realize the need for it and not construct buildings over it," said Paterno.

The city government had said that the Manila Division of City Schools (DCS) owned the property and plans the construction of a new office building in the park.

Antivice drive in Las Piñas

VICE breeds crime.

With this battle cry, Las Piñas Mayor Imelda Aguilar ordered city police chief Supt. Perpetuo Sanson to enforce a continuing drive against illegal vice.

Aguilar said she was holding Sanson responsible for removing and preventing the proliferation of illegal vices like drugs and gambling, especially among the youth.

The mayor specifically ordered action against the sale of shabu and marijuana, and the operation of illegal cockfights.

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QC council makes big waste producers pay a high price

By Tina G. Santos

THE QUEZON City Council has raised the fees for the collection of bulky and special wastes in the city.

Under the amended version of the Quezon City Revenue Code, residents requesting for the collection of bulky and special waste would now have to pay an amount equivalent to the cost of a truck's rental per trip.

The issuance of the rules and regulations for the new collections is one of the several revenue-generating measures formulated by the city government.

In amending the fee structure, local officials explained that existing charges were from 10 years ago and were already unrealistic.

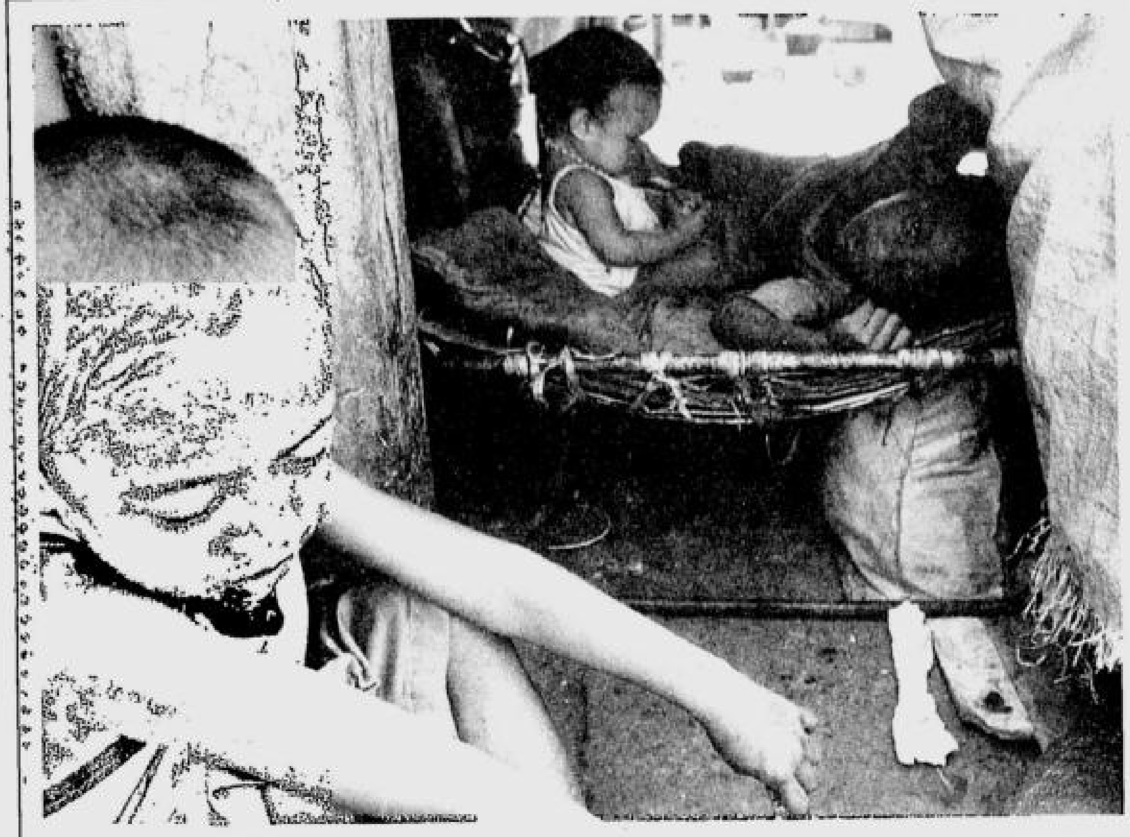
Once the new charges are set in place, garbage hauling by a 10-wheeled truck would be P2,150 per trip, while that of a six-wheeled truck would cost P1343.75. On the other hand, the services of a mini dump truck would cost P1,075.

Special operations

Only dump trucks contracted by the city for its special operations are authorized to haul solid waste.

Bulky and special waste refer to waste materials not normally collected by garbage contractors, including construction and demolition materials, fire debris, metal and plastic scraps, and commercial and industrial items, such as furniture, lamps, bookcases, filing cabinets and other similar items.

Exempted from the provision of the new rules and regulations governing the collection of bulky and special waste are materials arising from clearing activities of the city's Special Action Team and the Metro Manila Development Authority, those generated by government institutions and those that are illegally dumped along major thoroughfares.



JOAN BONDOC

HOME ON THE STREET
Children of scavengers wait for their parents inside their makeshift house along the busy streets of NIA road in QC.

Muslim cemetery up for face-lift

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

FINALLY, some attention.

The Taguig City Muslim Cemetery in Maharlika Village, purportedly the only Muslim Cemetery in Luzon, is scheduled for a much-needed rehabilitation this year.

Yesterday morning , the Office of Muslim Affairs and the barangay government launched the rehabilitation program for the five-hectare cemetery, which they said had turned into a haven of drug addicts and fugitives.

The cemetery has also become the dumping ground of salvage victims—instead of being a revered site—because of years of neglect, barangay chair Erlinda Pangandaman said.

But not only the cemetery is languishing.

Taguig City Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano said that after 25 years, Maharlika Village remained underdeveloped.

Roger, 48, who has been living in the village for 13 years, told the INQUIRER the village still did not have a decent hospital.

"During emergencies, we still have to rush our relatives to the Philippine General Hospital or in Rizal," he said in Filipino.

The village has no water connections yet. And some parts have no electricity.

The reason? The National Housing Authority, which maintains the area, owes the Manila Electric Company about P2 million in unpaid bills, Mayor Freddie Tiñga said.

He said the local government wanted to put up streetlights in the village but Meralco would not allow them to until the NHA had settled its debt.

Sadly, robbers had been taking advantage of the dark alleys, Pangandaman said.

The good news is there is already a P35 million foreign grant specifically for the development of Maharlika Village, Tiñga said.

The fund is still with the national government.

In the meantime, improving life in the village would have to start with the dead.

Pangandaman said barangay officials already started their own clean and green program for the cemetery.

However, they could not afford to install streetlights because of the barangay's limited budget.

But Tiñga said they were already negotiating with Meralco. And if plans push through, streetlights would be installed in the cemetery and on streets in the village by June.

The environment and natural resources department will also donate seedlings to be planted on the cemetery grounds, said OMA plans and policy director Kim Edres.

During yesterday's launch, interior and local government Secretary Angelo Reyes talked about solidarity and cooperation between Muslims and the government.

He said the rehabilitation of the cemetery was a great step forward.

Anti-illegal recruitment task force holds 6 'OFWs'

By Nikko Dizon

TWO OF them could not help but cry over the "embarrassment," they said, of having been duped by illegal recruiters, apprehended by law enforcers at the international airport, and having to go back home to relatives and friends who have wished them well in their new jobs abroad.

They were among the six Filipino women who were prevented from leaving the country yesterday afternoon by the Presidential Anti-Illegal Recruitment Task Force (Pairtf).

Held at the Centennial Terminal of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia), four bound for Busan, South Korea, were found holding fake Overseas Employment Certificates (OEC), while the other two who were supposed to fly to Singapore were "tourist workers," said Edgardo Castro, supervisor of the Pairtf-Naia.

Pairtf agents stopped the six women from leaving amid questions posed by airport personnel, immigration officials and even Filipinos bound for abroad on the "real mandate" of the anti-illegal task force.

Some airport insiders are citing complaints from certain passengers who said they felt harassed by Pairtf operatives.

Pairtf was created by President Arroyo to crack down on illegal recruiters and curb the increasing number of undocumented Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs).

Task force agents were conducting inspection of Filipino passengers at the Naia terminal when they intercepted the women before the latter were able to check into their flights.

Castro said in an interview that the two women bound for Singapore admitted that they intended to work in the city-state.

In the case of the four Busan-bound women, Castro said that while they had authentic work visas from the South Korean embassy, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) counter at the airport verified that their OECs were fake.

Castro said an OEC was issued to an OFW after the POEA had authenticated his or her employment contract abroad and other pertinent papers.

"The OEC certifies that the person leaving is a documented OFW," he said.

The Busan-bound women, who asked not to be named, told the INQUIRER that a Korean national by the name of Mr. Han interviewed them in Makati City some three months ago about job opportunities in Busan. Soon after, they received their visas and were told that they had work waiting for them at a hotel for a monthly salary of $500.

The women, aged 22, 25, 27 and 33, said that at the airport yesterday, a man and a woman who were local workers of Mr. Han, handed them their passports with the OECs attached. They said they did not know that the OECs were fake. They also could not identify or even describe to Pairtf agents the couple who gave them their passports.

A Pairtf agent told the INQUIRER that during interrogation, it appeared that one of the contacts was a relative of one of the women, which was why they claimed ignorance on the identities of their recruiters.

One of the two Singapore-bound women silently wept in a corner of the Paitf office, as her companion told the agents: "It's embarrassing to go home."

Concern for safety kills 2 in Tondo

By Tarra V. Quismundo

CONCERN over overloaded power connections in their community cost two men their lives in Tondo, Manila, Saturday night.

Bullets, shot at close range, instantly killed Fabio Daprosa and his brother, Rodrigo, inside a barangay outpost in the slum community of Isla Puting Bato.

"When I got there, I saw him sprawled on the floor... his face was blown up. Then my [brother-in-law] was face down on the floor. He was also not breathing," related Daprosa's wife.

Daprosa, 31, a coordinator of the People's Movement Against Poverty, his 28-year-old brother, and another friend, went to the barangay outpost at about 11:30 p.m. after they heard electricity cables crackle on the electric post in front of the barangay outpost.

"They wanted to check the electric post because power was already fluctuating. To do that, they would need to climb up the roof of the barangay outpost," said case investigator SPO3 William Gondranios.

The electric post, said Gondranios, was used to illegally connect electricity lines in the community.

Worried that the sparks might cause fire in the crowded neighborhood, the men sought permission from the *purok* leader, Delia Alpabete to climb up the roof, Gondranios said.

But Alpabete, one of the suspects in the shooting, reportedly did not allow the men to check the cables. A heated argument ensued, in the middle of which Alpabete reportedly ordered one of his men to shoot at Daprosa.

"*Abner, bahala ka na diyan, tirahin mo na* (Abner, you're in charge, finish him now)," related the third man who came with the Daprosa brothers to the outpost, quoting Alpabete.

Then suspect Radsid Capal, also known as Abner, allegedly fired his shotgun at Daprosa. Another man only known as Jerome shot Rodrigo.

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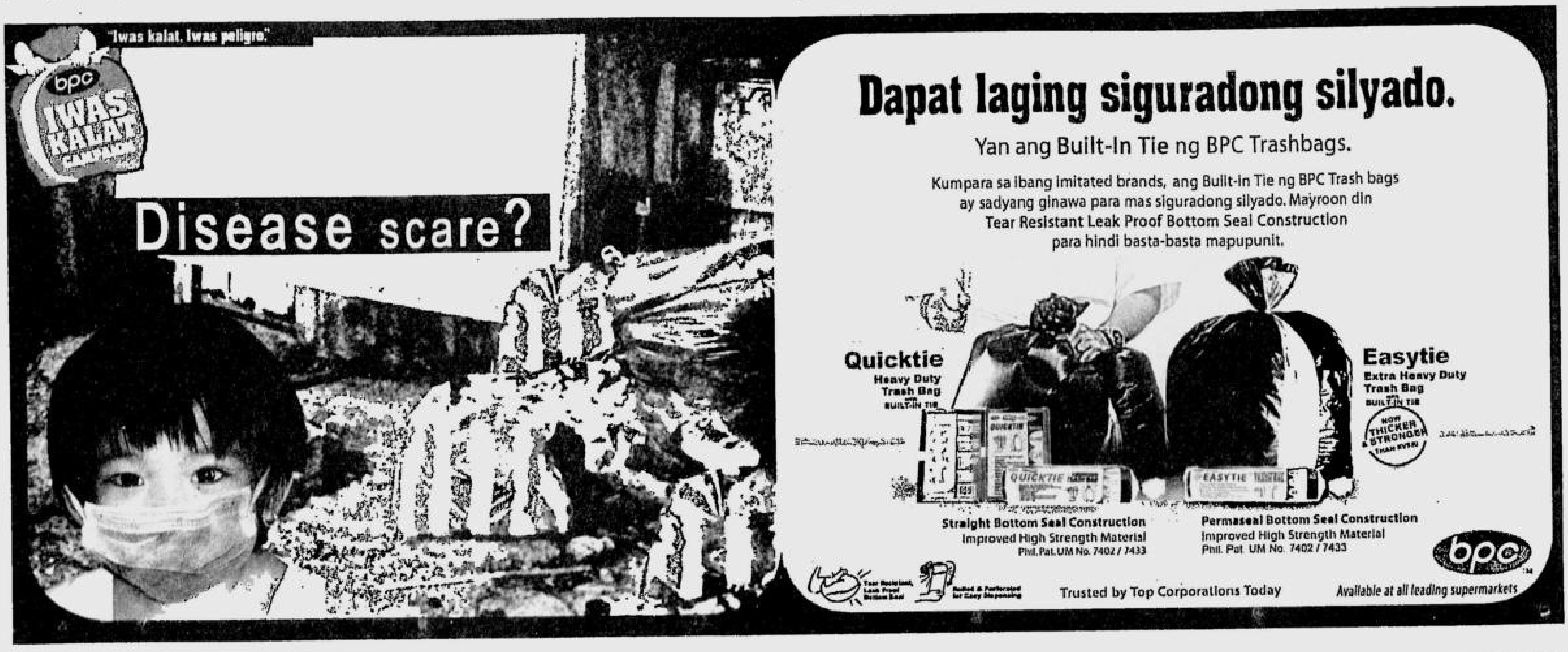
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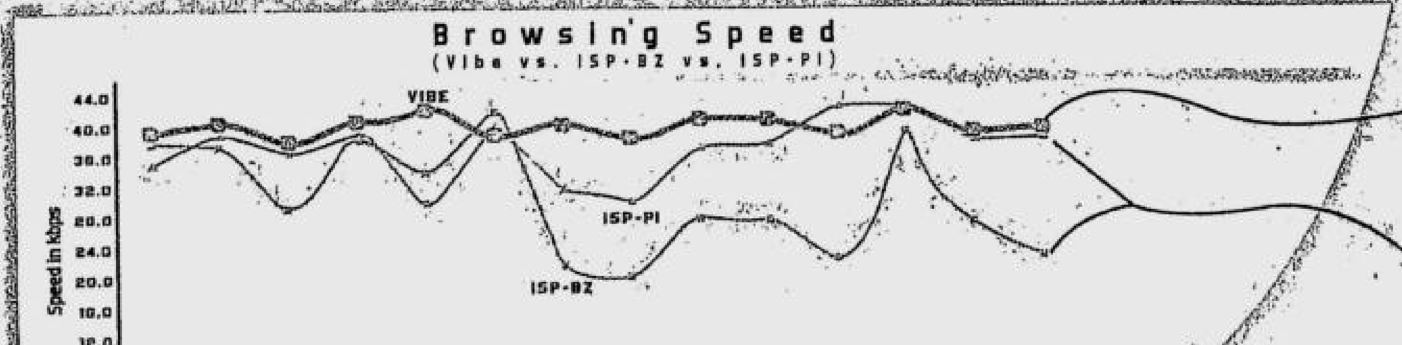

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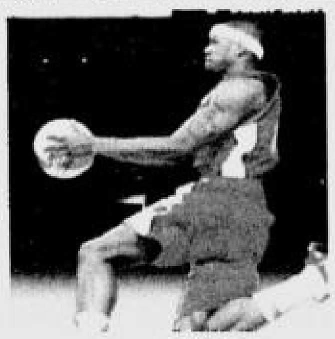
WHAT'S INSIDE

- Reyes favored in All-RP Billiards Open /A26
- Thongchai keeps Malaysian Open title by three strokes /A27
- Hawks' Smith, sultan of slam /A28
- Pounding the track rewards Soguilon /A28
- Happy reunion for 'King,' jockey Ladiana /A32



Younger brother urges Morales: Press the attack

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

UNLIKE Manny Pacquiao whose brother recently absorbed a neat boxing lesson, Mexican Erik Morales has a world-ranked bantamweight brother to lean on for vital fight inputs.

Diego "Pelucho" Morales yesterday advised his more illustrious brother to initiate the action and take the fight to the Filipino hero when they clash at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas for their 12-round duel on March 19.

"Erik should move toward Pacquiao's right side, and press the action," the 25-year-old southpaw, a former WBO super flyweight champion, told Box-Latino yesterday.

Good attacker

The younger brother of the Mexican legend, who is himself ranked WBC No. 1 and WBA No. 3 bantamweight, added that Pacquiao is only good on the attack, but doesn't know what to do when he is on the defensive.

"Pacquiao is like a machine that throws stones, but doesn't know what to do when he is attacked," he explained.

For Morales, this could be the key which both Marco Antonio Barrera and Juan Manuel Marquez failed to exploit. The two Mexicans had been on the receiving end of Pacquiao's vaunted left with Barrera losing by TKO in 2003 and Marquez needing a big rally to salvage a draw last year.

The younger Morales is currently staying at the Otomi Mountains assisting his brother prepare for the much-awaited Pacquiao showdown.

DIEGO Morales gives Erik a few tips against Pacquiao.

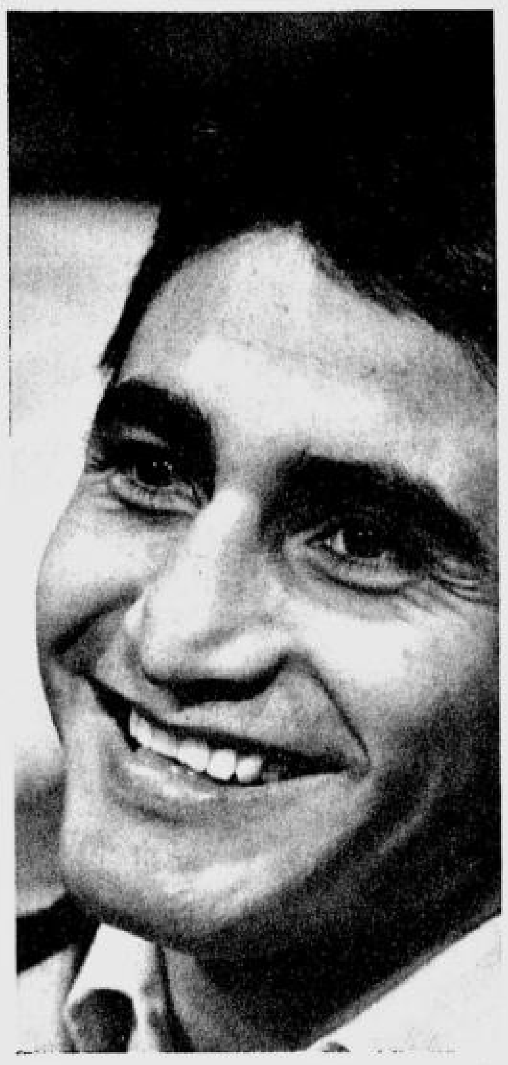
Lean training team

For the first time in 10 years, the Mexican has been training without his usual retinue which used to include a doctor, nutritionist, cook and physical conditioning coach.

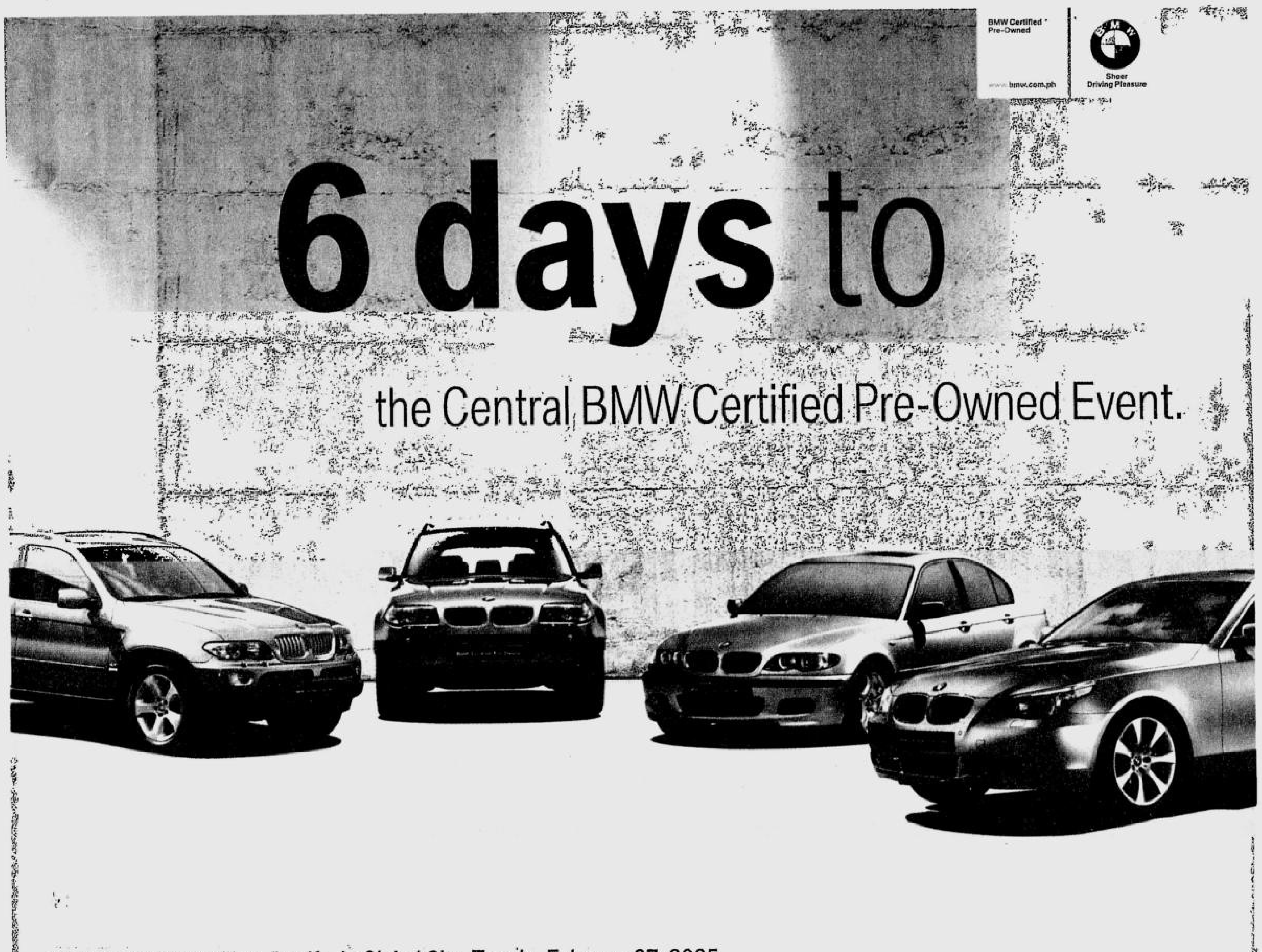
This time, he has trimmed down his team to include only his father-manager Jose Morales, his brother Diego, and trainer Fernando Fernandez.

Serving as Morales' sparmates at the Otomi Mountains in preparation for Pacquiao are Alirio Rivero, Rodrigo Juarez, Fernando "Wary" Beltran, Junior, Julio Gamez and Lupe Rangel.

Pacquiao is training under American Freddie Roach in Los Angeles and missed seeing his younger brother Bobby, the reigning Philippine junior lightweight champion, lose by a knockout in the ninth round last Friday to a Thai fighter Manny had demolished in 2002.



ERIK Morales (above) should "move towards Manny Pacquiao's right side and press the action," says his kid brother Diego. AP



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₱1-M All-RP Billiards Open starts

EFREN "Bata" Reyes sets out as the favorite.

THE HOPE P1 Million All-Filipino Billiards Open fires off this afternoon at the studios of IBC 13 at Broadcast Center, Quezon City.

Puyat Sports boss Aristeo "Putch" Puyat and Jemah Television president Mark Roces will make the ceremonial break to start the seven-day event held in cooperation with the Games and Amusement Board (GAB) and sanctioned by the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) headed by its president Ernesto Fajardo.

"May the best player win. *Lahat naman iyan ay magagaling, magkakatalo lang diyan kung sino ang buwenas sa break* (All of them are good, but the player who gets lucky in the break has the edge)," said Fajardo.

The tournament sponsored by Hope, Talk 'N Text and Smart serves as one of the qualifying phases for players vying for slots in the Philippine team to the Southeast Asian Games in Manila this November.

The 9-ball event will have a race-to-9 alternate break format and a double-elimination system—a player is eliminated after two losses.

Efren "Bata" Reyes is a heavy favorite to win the crown and the P500,000 top prize based on his recent performances abroad.

The 50-year-old Reyes, from Angeles City, Pampanga, fresh from winning the 1-pocket and 9-ball events of the 2005 Derby City Classic in Louisville, Kentucky, will face unheralded Carlo Viado, a 21-year-old from Moncada, Tarlac, in his first match.

Former world No. 1 Francisco "Django" Bustamante, who won $10,000 in topping the 2005 Weert 10th ball Open in the Netherlands, will be pitted against former snooker ace Joven Alba of Manila.

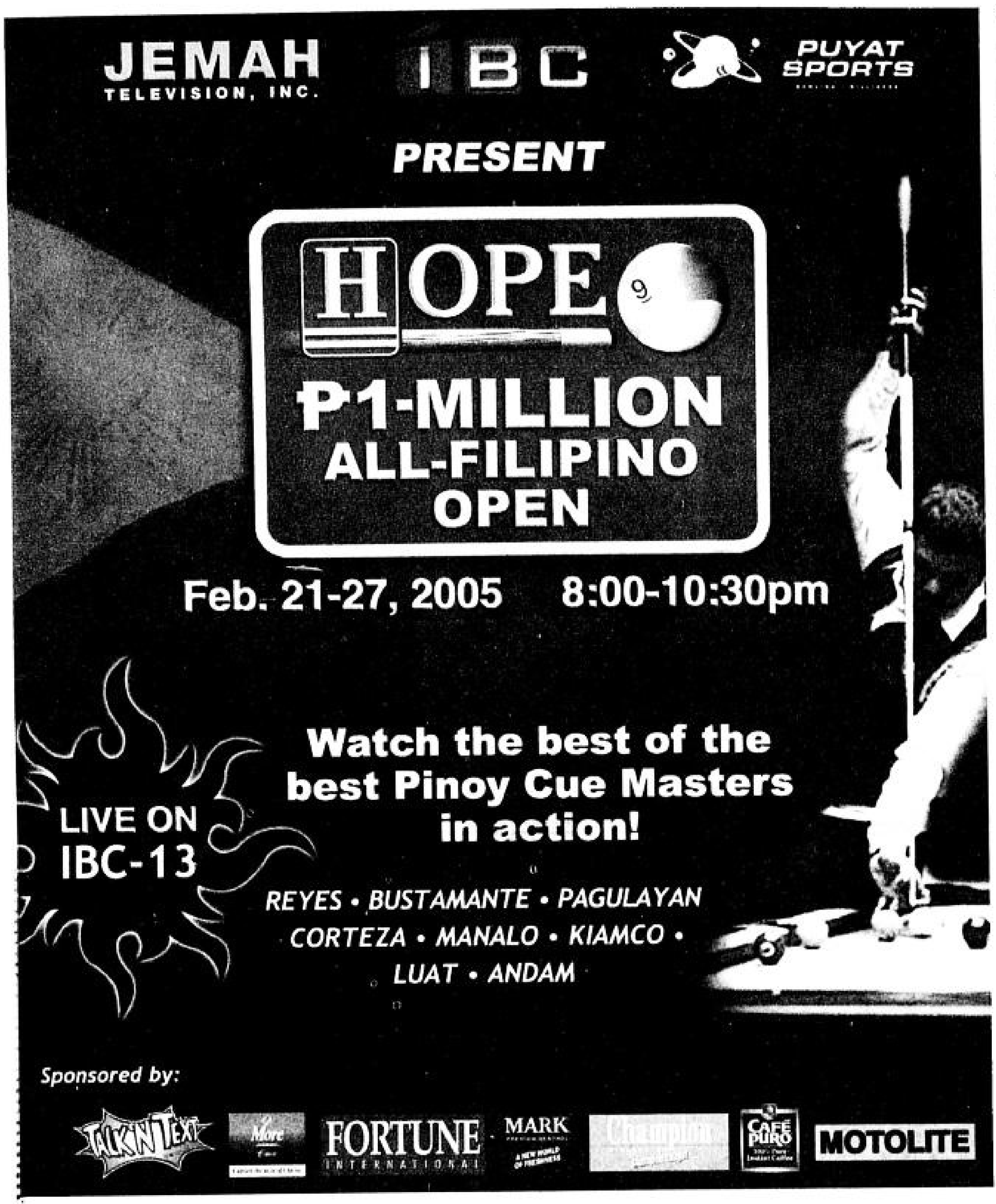
WARREN Kiamko is the usual dark horse.

The other opening matches pit reigning world champion Alex Pagulayan against Roberto Dy, 2003 Vietnam SEA Games double gold winner Lee Van Corteza against another snooker star Luis Saberdo, Marlon Manalo against 20-year-old Jeffrey De Luna, Leonardo Andam against Gandy Valle, Warren Kiamco against Antonio Gabica and Rodolfo Luat against Edgar Acaba.

The matches will be aired on IBC 13 from 8 to 10:30 p.m.

The top finisher in the last 16 outside of Reyes, Bustamante and Corteza will make it to the San Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour.

The runner-up will get P200,000 while the third and fourth placers will each receive P50,000. Other prizes are P30,000 each for fifth and sixth, P20,000 each for seventh and eighth and P12,500 each for ninth to 16th. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*



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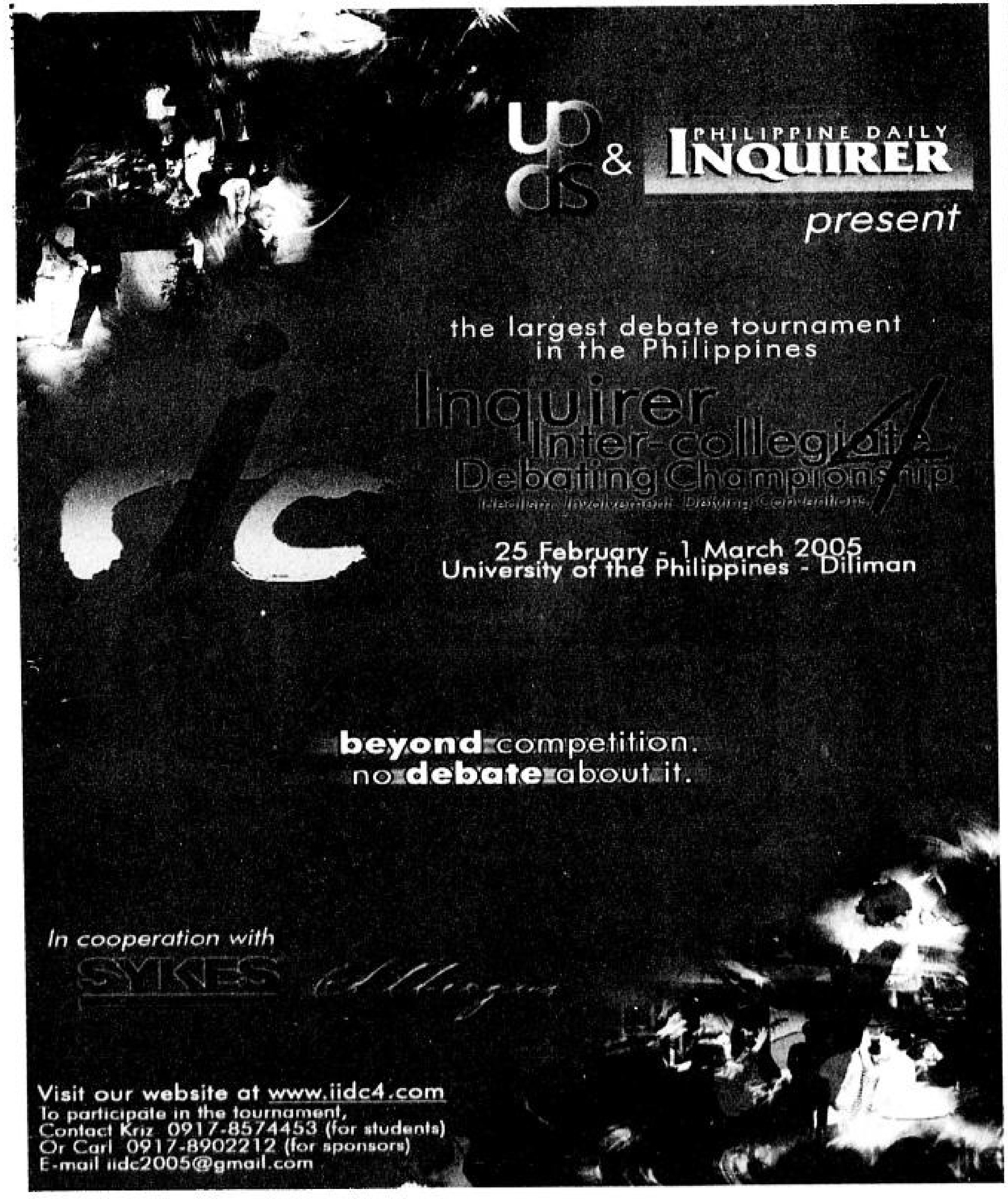

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Hoya's Pacquiao vote not valid

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

OSCAR De La Hoya's announcement, that his heart beats for Manny Pacquiao, deserves thankful applause.

This could also mean we've properly invested our hopes and prayers.

The vote should help boost the confidence of Pacquiao, reported to be peaking perfectly at the Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood for his March 19 encounter with Mexican icon Erik Morales.

It's actually incredible. Why, in the first place, would a legendary warrior, an astute boxer, go against his fellow Mexicans who'll again show up in full force at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas next month to wave the Mexican flag and rally behind Morales?

What De La Hoya had declared could be close to sedition, if there's such an offense in boxing.

***

Of course, coming all the way from the camp of the Golden Boy, that's a piece of great news for Filipino boxing fans.

But hold it. There's a little problem here.

If you did not notice, De La Hoya failed to explain why he picked Pacquiao over Morales.

All De La Hoya, a former world champion in six divisions, blurted was, "I like Pacquiao."

If he was proposing to a beautiful lady, that would be fine.

No need to offer a bunch of roses. No need to elaborate.

The infatuation would have been perfectly expressed.

***

But this is boxing. You don't just jump into conclusions. You don't cross party lines with no valid reason.

Naturally, I had to ask our trusted boxing correspondent, Salven Lagumbay, if De La Hoya had bothered to explain his vote.

Negative. It was all Hoya had said, as reported in Boxingtalk website chat line.

Problem is we could not force De La Hoya to elaborate.

I'm, therefore, counting that pro-Pacquiao vote invalid.

***

I could reconsider.

If De La Hoya returns to the website and explains that Pacquiao is younger, stronger, faster, tougher, I'd try to evaluate.

National pride is involved here and we should take caution not to get blinded.

Anyway, looking closely, it's easy to suspect Hoya's pro-Pacquiao sentiment was based on the Barrera Factor.

Yes, Marco Antonio Barrera who, after having conquered the comic, overrated Prince Naseem Hamed, last year dethroned countryman Erik Morales as world super featherweight king.

De La Hoya obviously feels that, instead of a possible Morales-Barrera IV, a Pacquiao-Barrera rematch would be a sure best-seller.

Hoya's Golden Boy outfit handles Barrera and Oscar was surely eyeing a windfall in pushing for a Pacquiao win come March 19.

***

Anyway, here at home, there's this swelling sentiment that Morales would prove no match against Pacquiao.

And, mind you, this is not being fueled by what trainer Freddie Roach had said that Morales, 28, is both old and weary.

No, as the fight nears, the *masa* continues to swear that Pacquiao would prove strong and superior to Morales.

It's like this. Morales was beaten by Barrera. Pacquiao, on the other hand, had stopped Barrera. So how could Morales be any better than Pacquiao, who had beaten Morales' conqueror?

That's the equation, the mantra, chanted daily by my fish vendor friends in the next village where I buy our table needs seven days a week.

As simple as that, *malinaw pa sa* mineral water, they insist.

***

That could also be the same reason why Pacquiao was promptly installed the favorite in the Las Vegas booking lines.

Morales lost to Barrera on points, while Pacquiao had beaten Barrera by knockout.

There's always the overwhelming Barrera Factor.

Well, at least, unlike Oscar De La Hoya, my sun-beaten friends in the fish market have based their infatuation on something tangible.

The problem, I hate to say, is that it won't be as simple as that come fight time.

Honestly, I've to rate the fight even.

Morales, the classic boxer, is better seasoned and definitely more skillful.

Pacquiao, born fighter, has the bigger punch that could stop his next opponent.

The winner must be able to surpass himself.

***

(FINAL NIGHT: The necrological rites for INQUIRER Entertainment editor Louie Camino, 52, will be held tonight, 8-10 p.m., at the Holy Trinity Chapels, St. Andrews room, 2nd floor, in Sucat, Parañaque. Funeral will be on Tuesday morning at the Manila Memorial Park, after the 9 a.m. Mass at Holy Trinity. Thanks and goodbye, great teammate.)

Buenavista, Manipol run true to form in dzMM 10K

EDUARDO Buenavista and Mercedita Manipol, the undisputed king and queen of local middle distance running, ran true to form in the 6th dzMM Takbo Para Sa Kalikasan 10K yesterday at the Quirino Grandstand.

Buenavista, a two-time Olympian who also holds the Philippine record in the full marathon, and Manipol, who has not lost in a local race since 2002, led all the way to claim the title and pocket the P10,000 top prize each.

Buenavista also posted his best 10-K open road time of 29 minutes and 14 seconds.

"I need to run 29 flat in the SEAG," said Buenavista, who will represent the country in the 5-K and 10-K events in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games this November.

Rene Herrera came in second at 30:59 while Bernardo Desamito settled for third at 32:04.

BUENAVISTA crosses the finish 1:44 minutes ahead of the field.

Manipol, who will also run in the SEAG 5-K and 10-K events, completed the course in 37:21. Her nearest pursuer was Liza Delfin who timed 42:08. The veteran Mila Paje came in third in 44:09.

Yesterday's event was held in partnership with Nation Petroleum Corp., Nike Phils. and the National Park Development Committee. The proceeds of the event will help rehabilitate the La Mesa Dam watershed.

The top three finishers in the men's 5-K fun run were Alley Quisay (15:57), Ronald Servidad (16:23) and Jordan Oberez while the distaff race was ruled by Nhean Barcena (20:25), Julie Rose Forbes (20:33) and Christine Delfin (20:35)

The winners in the Kiddies 10-12 division event were Jonas Sugalan (11:42) and Norjona Mangutara (12:44).

Thai ace keeps Malaysian Open title

THONGCHAI Jaidee poses with the trophy after winning the Malaysian Open by 3 shots. AFP

Angelo Que ends up in tie for 43rd

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia—Thongchai Jaidee of Thailand shot a 2-under-par 70 on Sunday to retain his Malaysian Open title for a total of 21-under 267 and a three-shot victory over India's Jyoti Randhawa.

This is the first time Thongchai, a 34-year-old former paratrooper, has successfully defended a title, his seventh career trophy. Thongchai now matches South Korean Kang Wook-soon's most number of victories in the region.

Filipino Angelo Que finished in a nine-way tie for 43rd place at 3-under 285 after closing with a 71 (35-36). He had earlier rounds of 73-70-71.

Que, who won in Vietnam last year, had a roller-coaster final round of six birdies, two double bogeys and a bogey.

Randhawa birdied the last hole en route to a 67 to finish runner-up with an 18-under 270, and Henrik Stenson of Sweden was third with a 17-under 271 in the $1.21-million event.

Thongchai, Asia's No. 1 player, joined Graham Marsh (1974-75) and Tomoo Ishii (1964-65) as players to win back-to-back Malaysian Opens since the tournament was first held in 1962.

Pivotal birdie

Randhawa, playing in the same group with Thongchai, was four under for the day through 13 but his momentum halted, no thanks to a 10-foot birdie attempt that lipped out. Leading by three heading to the tricky 16th, Thongchai knocked his tee shot to 12 feet of the flag and rolled in the birdie putt which killed off his challengers' hopes.

"Standing on the bogey putt on 11, I told myself I needed to make that as it was getting close. It was a great bogey. It then turned for me on 16 when I made birdie. I think I won it there," said the Thai, who also earned a spot to play in the WGC-NEC Invitational with the success.

Irishman Paul McGinley and another Swede, Niclas Fasth, shared fourth position.

Sunday's victory was worth $201,660 for Thongchai and hauled him back to the top of the Asian Tour Order of Merit.

Thailand's Prom Meesawat shot a closing 73 to finish in tied sixth place on 277 with Spaniard Miguel Angel Jimenez.

Irish star Padraig Harrington faded to a 74 and settled for tied eighth position with China's Liang Wen-chong. *AP*

Gonzales seeks GM norm in Asian chess tilt

INTERNATIONAL Master Jayson Gonzales, the country's top scorer in last year's World Chess Olympiad, competes in the 5th Asian Individual Chess Championship on March 21-31 at the Hotel Riviera Suites, Kochi, Kerala, in India.

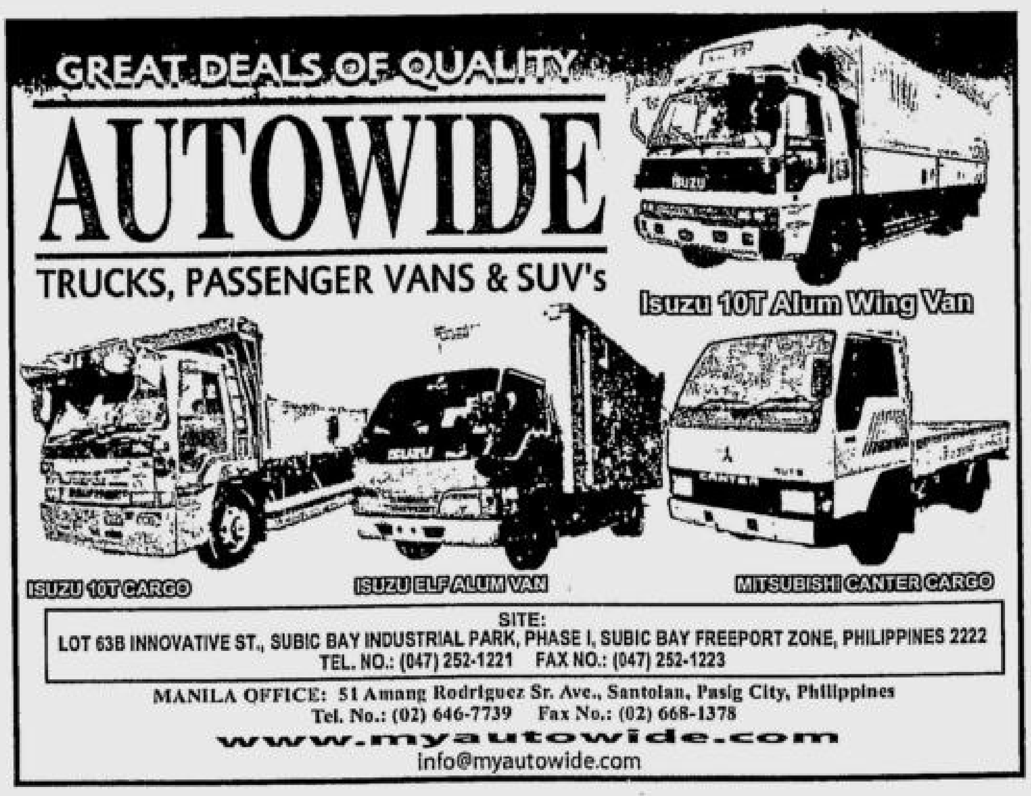
The top 13 finishers will advance to the Fide World Chess Championship.

Gonzales is currently ranked sixth among Filipino players in the latest release of Fide rating with a 2459 ELO.

He is hoping to earn another grandmaster result in the Asian championship to move within a norm of becoming the country's next GM.

His first GM norm came in the 2004 Calvia Open where he finished third with 7.0 points in nine rounds. He fell half a point off a norm in the World Chess Olympiad in Majorca, Spain, finishing with 8.0 points in 11 matches.

Gonzales placed sixth in the individual classification on Board 4. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*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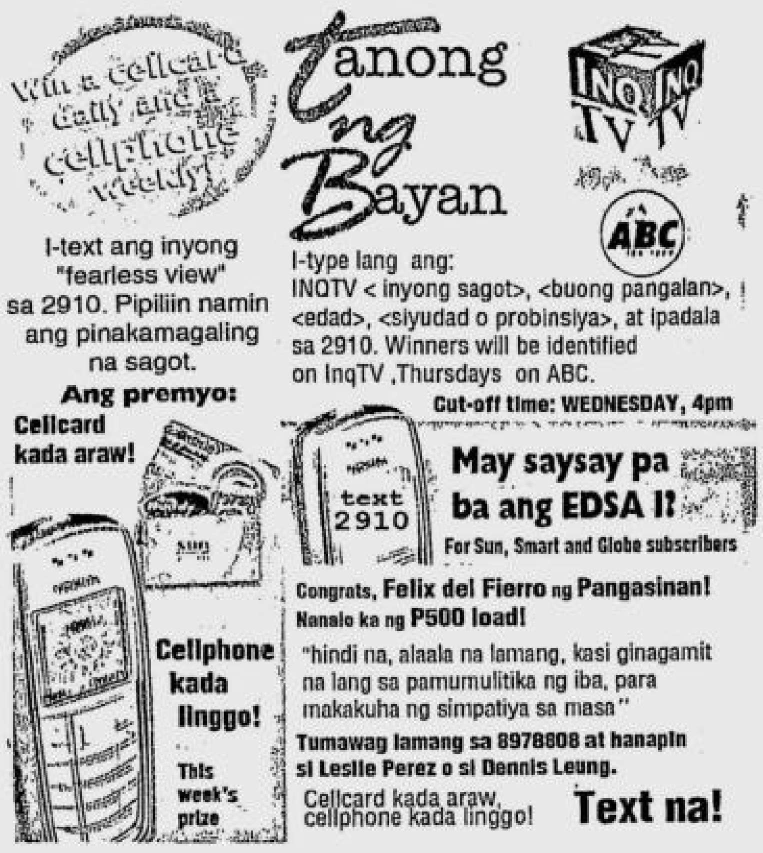
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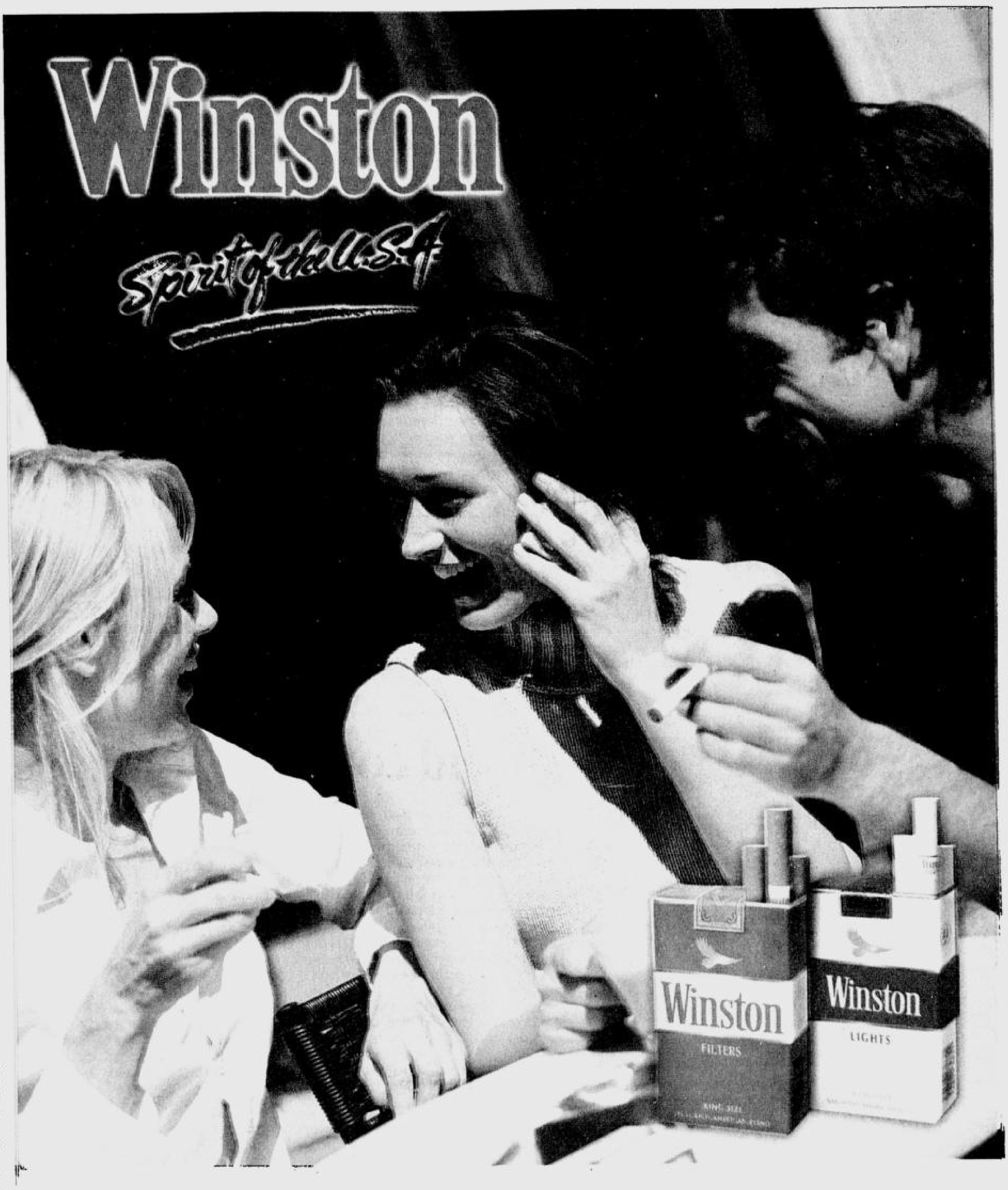

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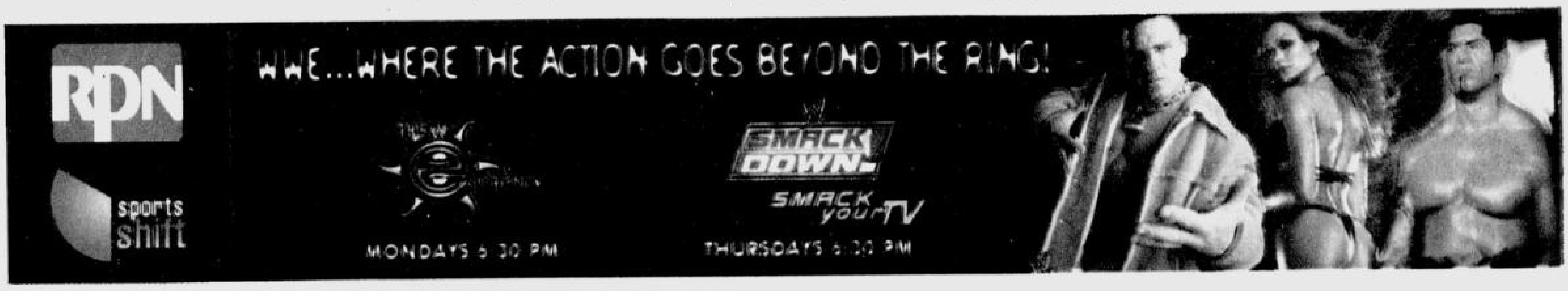
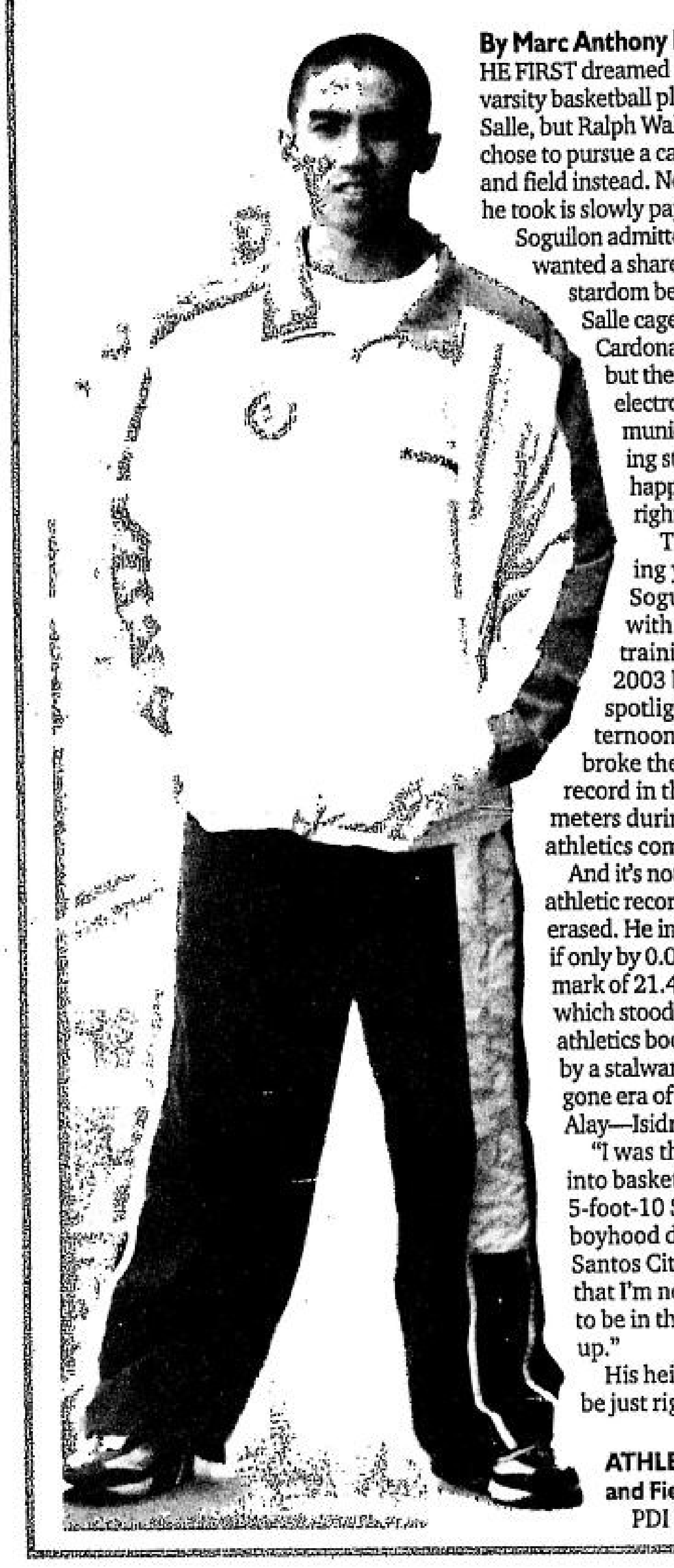


Pounding the track rewards Soguilon



By Marc Anthony Reyes

HE FIRST dreamed of becoming a varsity basketball player for La Salle, but Ralph Waldy Soguilon chose to pursue a career in track and field instead. Now the gamble he took is slowly paying off.

Soguilon admitted that he also wanted a share of the campus stardom bestowed on La Salle cage stars like Mac Cardona and Ty Tang, but the 21-year-old electronics and communication graduating student said he's happy where he is right now.

The unassuming yet articulate Soguilon has been with the national training pool since 2003 but he hit the spotlight Friday afternoon when he broke the national record in the men's 200 meters during the UAAP athletics competitions.

And it's not an ordinary athletic record that he erased. He improved—even if only by 0.01 second—the mark of 21.44 seconds, which stood in the national athletics books since 1984, by a stalwart from the bygone era of Gintong Alay—Isidro del Prado.

"I was then very much into basketball," said the 5-foot-10 Soguilon of his boyhood days in Gen. Santos City. "But I figured that I'm not tall enough to be in the varsity lineup."

His height proved to be just right for a sprinter, though. Del Prado, now a national coach, only stands 5-foot-8 like 2001-2003 Southeast Asian Games 400m gold winner Ernie Candelario.

Soguilon's major influence in athletics were his parents Waldemar and Venus. Waldemar, a banker in Gen. Santos, used to excel in corporate track and field meets. "He got me into sports at an early age," said Soguilon who left for Manila to pursue his athletics scholarship at La Salle when he was 16.

He said he has no problem staying with the rest of the national team in Baguio City who are preparing for the Southeast Asian Games from next month until November.

"As Mr. Go (Teng Kok, athletics boss) said, this opportunity to compete in the SEA Games in front of your countrymen only comes once in a lifetime," Soguilon said.

"I might as well grab that chance and make the most of it."

When he broke Del Prado's record, Soguilon said he was only aiming for his own UAAP mark (of 21.80 seconds). He also never entertained the idea of becoming the next track superstar after the retirement of Del Prado, Lydia de Vega-Mercado and Elma Muros-Posadas.

"I don't want to rush things," said Soguilon, who made it to the 2003 Vietnam SEAG as a member of the sprint relay team. "The important thing is, I like what I do. I make simple goals and try to reach them on my own terms."

Last Friday, at the historic Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, Soguilon finally surpassed his own, modest goal.

ATHLETE/ FEBRUARY 19, 2005 Waldy Soguilon, Track and Field Athlete (for Mark Anthony Reyes/Sports)
PDI PHOTO/ REM ZAMORA

Williams overpowers M

BRUSSELS—Venus Williams outgunned Anastasia Myskina, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, Saturday to reach the final of the $585,000 Antwerp Diamond Games.

The American former world No. 1 will face France's Amelie Mauresmo in Sunday's final after the top seed earlier beat Australian Alicia Molik, 6-3, 7-6.

Williams started her semifinal in great fashion, hitting powerful serves and solid volleys to move 4-0 ahead after just eight minutes on her way to closing out the first set, 6-3.

Unforced errors crept into the American's game in the second set allowing her Russian opponent to level, but the power of Williams' serve proved decisive in the third set.

"I made so many mistakes in the second set that I helped her get her confidence back so she could come back into the match," said Williams.

Mauresmo served 14 aces and dominated at the net against an opponent who was slow to pick up pace.

Asked about facing Williams, Mauresmo said: "I saw Venus winning her quarterfinal yesterday against Kim Clijsters and she is very strong at the moment. We'll see what happens tomorrow."

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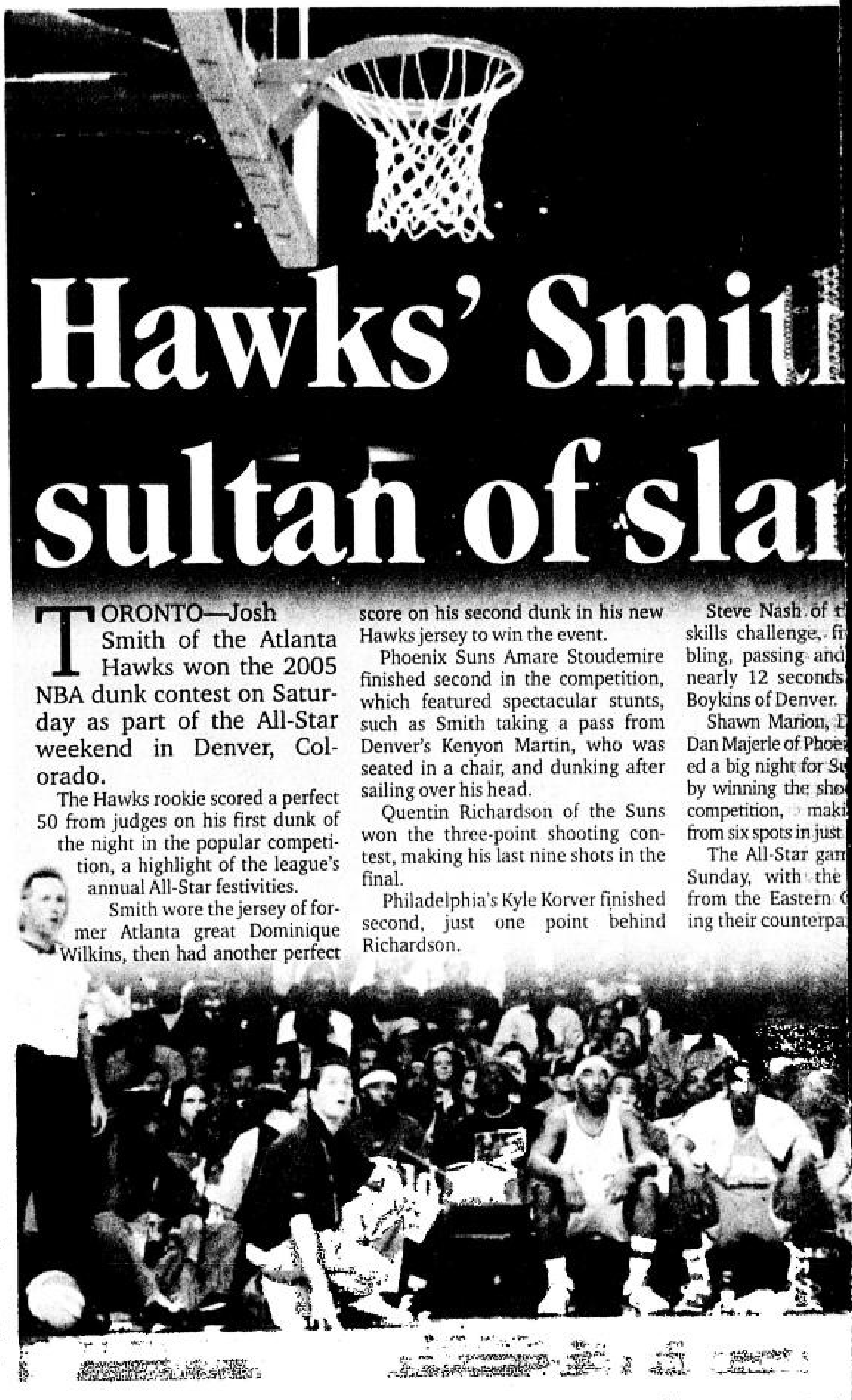

Hawks' Smit sultan of sla

TORONTO—Josh Smith of the Atlanta Hawks won the 2005 NBA dunk contest on Saturday as part of the All-Star weekend in Denver, Colorado.

The Hawks rookie scored a perfect 50 from judges on his first dunk of the night in the popular competition, a highlight of the league's annual All-Star festivities.

Smith wore the jersey of former Atlanta great Dominique Wilkins, then had another perfect score on his second dunk in his new Hawks jersey to win the event.

Phoenix Suns Amare Stoudemire finished second in the competition, which featured spectacular stunts, such as Smith taking a pass from Denver's Kenyon Martin, who was seated in a chair, and dunking after sailing over his head.

Quentin Richardson of the Suns won the three-point shooting contest, making his last nine shots in the final.

Philadelphia's Kyle Korver finished second, just one point behind Richardson.

Steve Nash of t
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Matsui open to Yankee extension

TAMPA, Florida—Hideki Matsui wouldn't mind wrapping up a contract extension with the New York Yankees before the end of spring training.

"I'd like to stay a Yankee as long as possible. That's my desire right now," Matsui said Saturday through a translator at New York's minor league complex.

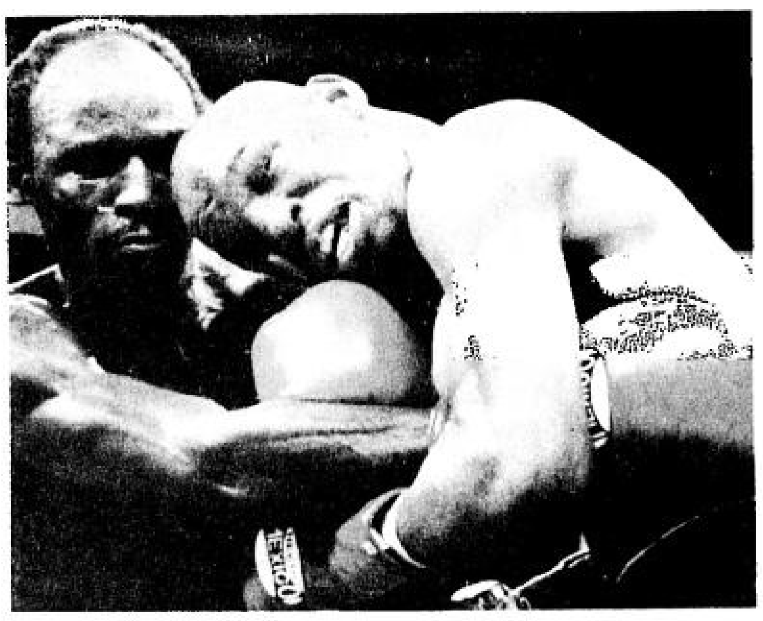
Matsui, who worked out at camp for the first time Saturday, is due $8 million in 2005, the final season of a $21 million, three-year deal. He has a clause in his contract that requires the Yankees to put him on waivers unless a new contract is agreed to by Nov. 15.

Talks have not yet started between the Yankees and Matsui's agent, Arn Tellem, though the sides probably will try to put together a new deal soon.

The 30-year-old outfielder was a three-time MVP in Japan's Central League before joining the Yankees in 2003. He hit .298 with 31 homers and 108 RBIs last season after batting .287 with 16 homers and 106 RBIs in his first season in New York.

Yankees manager Joe Torre doesn't believe Matsui would be distracted if extension talks go into the regular season.

"If he is, I'd be surprised," Torre said. "He's too professional. When you've been around the game as long as he has, he knows what his job is. AP



UNDISPUTED middleweight champion Bernard Hopkins (right) trades blows with Howard Eastman in the fifth round of their title fight. AFP

20 and counting for ring king Hopkins

LOS ANGELES—At the age of 40, Bernard Hopkins successfully defended his middleweight title for the 20th time Saturday with a unanimous 12-round decision over Britain's Howard Eastman.

Hopkins overcame his usual slow start to dominate the fight, keeping his undisputed middleweight title with a lopsided win over the game but outclassed Eastman.

In a fight that was booed by many at the Staples Center, Hopkins won easily on all three ringside scorecards to remain unbeaten in the last 11 years.

"It's an accomplishment I wanted ever since I got to 10 or 11 defenses," Hopkins said. "He gave some good shots but I gave some good shots back."

The fight was the first for Hopkins since turning 40, an age when most fighters have long left the ring. But he appeared to be the fresher fighter in the later rounds as he used an unorthodox but effective style to win the fight.

One judge had the fight 119-110 in favor of Hopkins, while a second had it 117-111. The third judge had the fight 116-112, the same score as The Associated Press.

It was the first middleweight title fight in Los Angeles since Sugar Ray Robinson and Gene Fullmer fought to a draw in 1960, and though it was lacking in excitement at times, there was no question who won the fight.

No question that is, except from Eastman, who complained he should have been given more credit for pursuing Hopkins much of the fight.

"He ran from me the whole night," Eastman said. "He was the champion fighting in his own backyard but I dictated the pace. He didn't fight like a champ. He never hurt me."

Eastman has never lost in Britain. And he's never won outside of it, losing a title fight to William Joppy in 2001 and then losing his second title shot to Hopkins.

Eastman (40-2) threw far more punches than Hopkins (46-2-1), but many of them found air as Hopkins ducked, moved and often made Eastman pay by coming back with a counterpunch.

Ringside stats showed Hopkins was much more efficient while Eastman was much busier. Hopkins landed 148 of 346 punches, while Eastman landed 82 of 609.

Hopkins started cautiously as usual, but Eastman was even more cautious, barely throwing a punch in the first round and drawing boos from the Sraples Center crowd.

On the undercard, Jermain Taylor made a case for himself as the future of the division—and a possible contender for Hopkins—by stopping Daniel Edouard in the third round. *AP*

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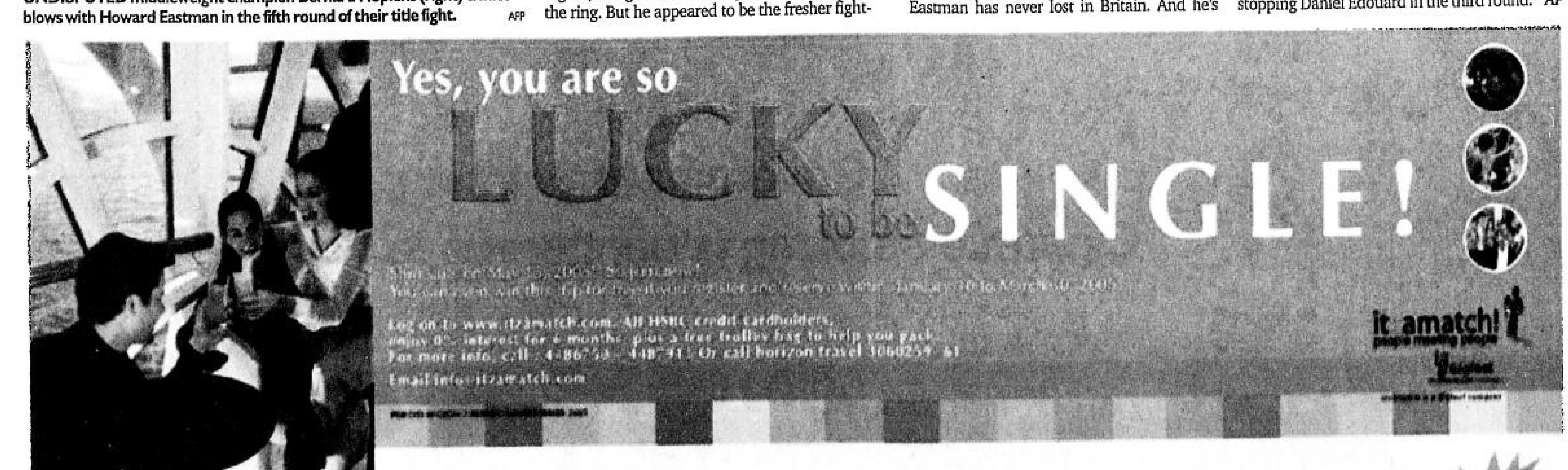

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lyskina; Federer gains final

s added: "Every match is different, nd we'll see what happens in the fi- er day, another opponent."

time they met was in Philadelphia hen Mauresmo won, 7-5, 5-7, 6-1.

e Federer

rdam, Roger Federer oozed confi- e set up a World Indoor Tourna- with Ivan Ljubicic after a 7-5, 6-3 r Mario Ancic on Saturday.

ld No. 1's win also denied Ancic the set up an all-Croatian title show- Ljubicic beat Sweden's Thomas Johansson, 7-6, 7-5, in the first semifinal.

Sunday's contest will be a repeat of last month's Doha final, in which Federer trounced Ljubicic in straight sets.

"I have good experience of the first final we played this year, so good for me," was the smiling Federer's verdict. "I have to stay focused for just one more match."

Ancic had overpowered the Swiss top seed in their only previous encounter, at Wimbledon in 2002, but that was before Federer had won any of his four Grand Slam titles.

With Federer well aware that Ancic would try to dominate proceedings with his fearsome serves and attacking netplay, he bided his time before moving in for the kill.

As the pair exchanged blistering shots in a highly entertaining match, Federer was unfazed by two wasted break point opportunities in the seventh game.

In Salvador, Brazil, sixth-seeded Rafael Nadal defeated Alberto Martin, 6-0, 6-7 (2), 6-1, Saturday to win the US$380,000 ATP Brazil Open in an all-Spanish final.

Nadal, ranked 48th in the world, outplayed Martin during most of the match at the northeastern coastal resort of Costa do Sauipe, winning his second ATP title. Reuters; AP

VENUS Williams returns to Russia's Anastasia Myskina during their semifinal match in the WTA Proximus Diamond Games. AP

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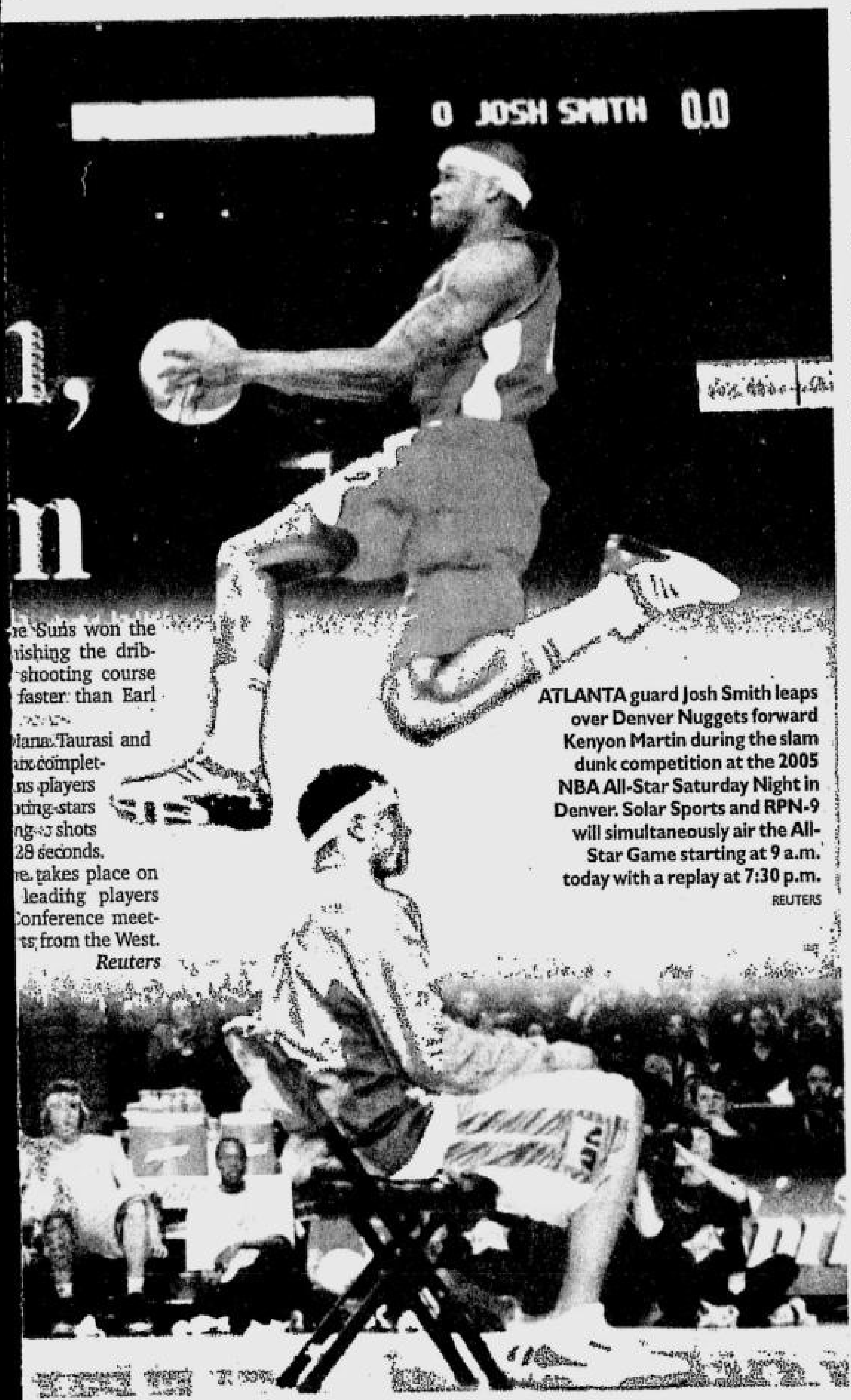
he Suns won the ishing the drib- shooting course faster than Earl

lana Taurasi and ix complet- ns players oting stars ng shots 28 seconds.

e takes place on leading players Conference meet- ts from the West.

Reuters



ATLANTA guard Josh Smith leaps over Denver Nuggets forward Kenyon Martin during the slam dunk competition at the 2005 NBA All-Star Saturday Night in Denver. Solar Sports and RPN-9 will simultaneously air the All-Star Game starting at 9 a.m. today with a replay at 7:30 p.m. REUTERS

Barcelona wins again, pads lead over R. Madrid

MADRID—Barcelona stretched its lead at the top of the Primera Liga to seven points on Saturday with a confident 2-0 home win against Real Mallorca while arch-rival Real Madrid slumped to a 2-0 defeat to Athletic Bilbao.

Barca disposed of Hector Cuper's Mallorca after an early penalty save by Victor Valdes was followed by two fine individual strikes by Portuguese midfielder Deco.

Bilbao put an end to Real's seven-match winning streak under coach Vanderlei Luxemburgo thanks to a bullet header from fullback Asier del Horno and a cool finish from midfielder Andoni Iraola.

It was Real's first defeat since Luxemburgo took charge at the end of last year.

The results mean Barca lead the standings on 57 points from 24 games, Real follow on 50, while third-placed Sevilla, which travel to Real Sociedad later on Saturday, are nine points further back on 41.

Barca was given an early scare at the Nou Camp when Mallorca was awarded a penalty after defender Carles Puyol was adjudged to have pushed Luis Garcia in the area in the 12th minute.

Valdes, however, came to the rescue when he guessed right and got his hand to Garcia's spot kick.

Luxemburgo dropped Ronaldo to the bench after his failure to train properly during the week and rested Raul and Zinedine Zidane ahead of next week's Champions League clash against Juventus.

Michael Owen was given a rare start with Guti moving forward from midfield to support him upfront and David Beckham switching from the right to partner Thomas Gravesen in the middle. Reuters

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orrential ains wipe ut Nissan rd round

NTO—Play was washed out Nissan Open in Los Angeles urday after a second consecu- ay of heavy rain, virtually nteeing the $4.8 million tour- nt will carry over into Monday.

urday's start at the Riviera ry Club had been scheduled 0 a.m PST (1530 GMT) but times were pushed back to a.m. before the second round entually suspended.

ght now, we're banking on e're going to be able to play omorrow and complete 36 tournament director Mark l said.

ne players, including first-day Brian Davis of Britain, have t begun their second rounds here is little hope of finishing urnament on schedule with ain forecast for Sunday.

rential rains swept across the Palisades on Friday.

h half the field still to com- heir second round, American Campbell holds the clubhouse t nine-under-par 133 after g a bogey-free six-under 65.

mpbell is three shots clear of Australia's Robert Allenby mpatriot Kevin Sutherland.

rld No. 2 Tiger Woods, who claim top spot in the rankings iji's Vijay Singh if he can fin- right fourth here or better, eted just four holes and is g a group one shot farther t five under. *Reuters*

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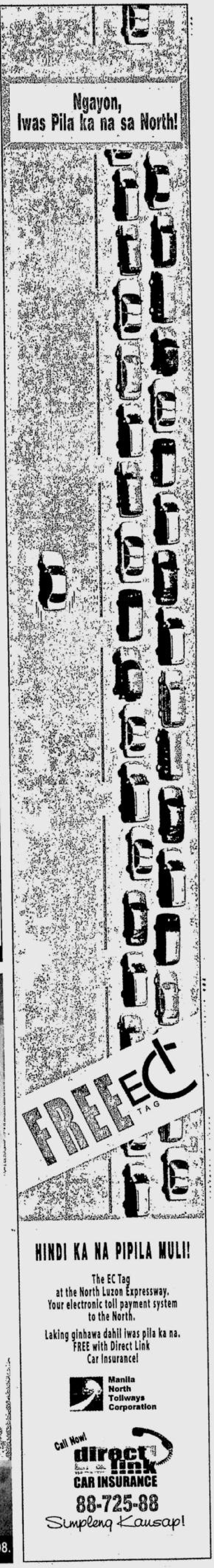
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THX 1 CONSTANTINE	1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 1 CONSTANTINE 1:15, 3:45, 6:15, 8:45, 11:15	1 CONSTANTINE
2 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA	2 DREAMBOY	2 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 CONSTANTINE 12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30	2 WITHOUT A PADDLE
3 CONSTANTINE	3 CONSTANTINE	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 CONSTANTINE 11:40, 2:10, 4:40, 7:10, 9:40	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 RAY 2:30, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30	3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 SIDEWAYS	4 CONSTANTINE	4 RAY	GUARANTEED SEATS 4 SIDEWAYS 1:20, 3:50, 6:20, 8:50, 11:20	4 DREAMBOY
5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN		5 SIDEWAYS	GUARANTEED SEATS 5 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA 12:50, 3:30, 6:10, 8:40, 11:30	5
		6 CONSTANTINE		
		7 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA		

GB1 Greenbelt 1	
1	SIDEWAYS 2:10, 4:40, 7:10, 9:40
2	CONSTANTINE 11:35, 2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 9:35

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GALLERIA 632-9115/16

1 CONSTANTINE • THX 11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00
2 CONSTANTINE 10:50 1:30 4:10 6:50 9:30
3 RAY 11:05 1:55 4:45 7:35 10:00
4 5 CHILDREN AND IT 11:10 1:20 3:30
SHALL WE DANCE 5:30 7:00 9:30
5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
6 SIDEWAYS 11:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00
7 DREAMBOY 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
8 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA 1:15 4:10 7:05 10:00
9 MEET THE FOCKERS 1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00
10 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 CONSTANTINE 10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
2 5 CHILDREN AND IT 10:10 12:05 2:00 3:25
FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX 5:20 7:40 10:00
3 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA 10:20 1:05 4:00 6:55 9:50
4 DREAMBOY 10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
5 SIDEWAYS 10:35 1:15 3:55
CONSTANTINE 9:20
6 LET THE LOVE BEGIN 10:15 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
7 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13 10:20 12:30 2:;50 5:10 7:30 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 5 CHILDREN AND IT 10:50 12:50 2:50
ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13 6:40 9:00
2 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA 12:15 3:15 6:15 9:15
3 SIDEWAYS 10:40 1:10 3:40 6:20 9:00
4 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX 11:20 1:45 4:05 6:30 9:00
5 CONSTANTINE 12:05 2:45 5:25 8:05 10:30
6 DREAMBOY 11:20 1:40 4:00 6:20 8:30 10:30
7 BATH HOUSE 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
8 LET THE LOVE BEGIN 12:05 2:45 5:25 8:05 10:30

NOVALICHES 935-3229/31

1 CONSTANTINE 11:50 2:40 5:30 8:25
2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN 11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9.00
3 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA 11:20 2:20 5:20 8:25
4 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX 1:00 3:20 5:50 8:25
5 DREAMBOY 10:20 12:50 3:20 5:50 8:25
6 ALFIE 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55
7 ELEKTRA 12:30 2:30 4:30 6:30 8:30
8 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55

PIONEER 687-5378

1 CONSTANTINE
2 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
3 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
4 LET THE LOVE BEGIN

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
2 DREAMBOY
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 ELEKTRA

CAINTA 240-4661

1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 DREAMBOY
3 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
4 CONSTANTINE

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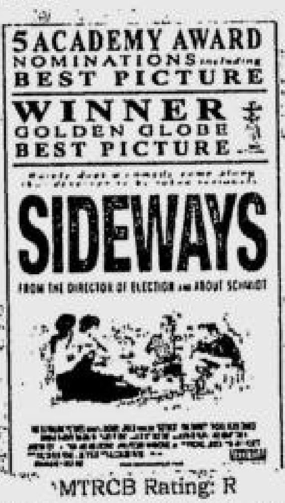
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2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3 FLIGHT OF PHOENIX
4 DREAMBOY
5 MEET THE FOCKERS

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2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
3 CONSTANTINE
4 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN

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4 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON

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2 DREAMBOY
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Salip brods advance in Milo netfest

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The Salip brothers scored contrasting victories at the start of the 2005 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and regional workshop at the Zamboanga City Lawn Tennis Association clay courts here. Pupik Salip edged Noel Damian, 6-4, 2-6, 11-9, in the unisex 10-under before Jimbo Salip blasted Alsal Igasan, 6-1, 6-3, in the boys' 14-under division. Jimbo made the second round along with Abdul Khalil Mala, who blasted Daser Taulama, 6-1, 6-1, and Wilbert Dalanon, who retired Benjie Lumabiang, 6-3, 3-0, in the Milo tournament organized by CTW, supported by adidas and sanctioned by the Philta. In the boys' 16-under class, Efren Macasinag demolished Buddari Patarasa, 6-1, 6-2, while Asdil Hadjinula tripped Jimsid Ascali, 2-6, 7-5, 10-7.

Daungan darts meet Wednesday

ANOTHER classified doubles tournament offering a total prize of P10,000 will be held on Wednesday at the Daungan Restaurant on Madre Ignacia St. in Quezon City. The event comes on the heels of the highly successful opening leg of the Metro Manila Darts Circuit held at the same venue and is being organized by the Daungan Darts Club. Mode of play is KOC (killers-01-choice) 701. Entry fee is P130 inclusive of one free drink. Registration starts at 6 p.m. and the tournament proper begins at 8:30. Last month, Joseph Domanais lived up to his top billing by ruling the opening leg of the circuit at the Daungan Restaurant, which is fast becoming one of the most popular darts venues in Metro Manila.

Las Piñas hosts 4th GCAP derby

TOP-QUALITY fights await cockfight enthusiasts tonight when the fourth of the 12-leg Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines 7-Cock Derby fires off at the Las Piñas Coliseum beginning at 7 p.m. Sponsor is Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Tony Lasala's NML SP entry topped the third leg on Feb. 9. The stage is set for another showdown among topnotch entries like Binangonan of Gov. Ito Yñares, JSF of Jet Fernando, Mulawin A of Rudy Albano, Complexor 3000 of popular campaigner Patrick Antonio, Love U Papa of Benjie Lim, Miko Fatman of Pepito Ngo and Boy de Roca, St. Joseph of Mayor Nene Aguilar, Against All Odds of Gerry Ramos, PEBR of Pol Estrellado and Boy Royo, Agilahas of Jenjen Arayata, JDL of Boyet Legazpi and Bobbit Pies, TR Selection of Tito Reyes and TL, and Paeng of Tonette Luzuriag and Paeng Araneta. The championship round is set Wednesday. For inquiries, call 8731040 and 8743910. The group will also stage the first GCAP International 8-Cock Derby on June 6, 8 and 11. Meanwhile, some 50 entries have signed up for a special 3-cock event on Saturday with LPC manager Alex Tobisas and Cito Manansala as hosts.

Puyat will help billiards, not seek its top post

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

LONGTIME billiards patron Aristeo "Putch" Puyat is always ready and willing to help the national team, but he isn't keen on becoming the next president of the embattled Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines.

"That is out of the question," said Puyat when asked if he was seeking the BSCP top post, stressing he was happy with the achievements of his players led by former World 9-Ball champion Efren "Bata" Reyes, Francisco "Django" Bustamante and, most recently, reigning world champion Alex "The Lion" Pagulayan, all mainstays of the powerhouse Puyat Sports team. "I could not have asked for more."

According to reports, a power struggle between BSCP secretary general Joaquin Perez de Tagle and incumbent president Ernesto Fajardo will ensue in the coming BSCP elections.

De Tagle reportedly wants to unseat Fajardo and install Sen. Francis Pangilinan as president. But the country's leading players, headed by Reyes and Bustamante, including many of the lower-rated ones, have come out in the open to support the leadership of Fajardo and Puyat, who was personally picked recently by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo to be the godfather for billiards in the coming SEA Games.

Incidentally, do you know that the pro players seeing action in the SEA Games stand to lose a fortune because they will skip a number of lucrative tournaments in the United States? But as in the past, the players won't mind because their primary goal and that of brothers Putch and Popit Puyat is to win the SEA Games gold and not to win the pot of gold in America.

Meanwhile, the country's veteran and up-and-coming players strut their savvy in the Hope P1-Million All-Filipino Billiards Open starting today at the IBC Studios in Quezon City. And based on his vast experience and recent record, Reyes is my wise money choice to emerge the winner.

The 9-ball event offering P500,000 to the champion is a race-to-9 alternate break format with a player getting eliminated after two losses. Also, outside of Reyes, Bustamante, Pagulayan and Lee Van Corteza, the top finisher in the last 16 will qualify for the San Miguel Beer-Asian 9-Ball Tour which begins next month.

***

EMERGING COCKFIGHTING STAR. Mild-mannered Rey Briones, my colleague in the defunct Evening Post, is making waves in the local cockfighting scene. A World Slasher champion and a tabloid executive at present, Briones is setting the pace in the 2005 Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association "Cocker of the Year" race with 12.5 points. He boosted his bid in the prestigious circuit with a smashing victory in the recent fourth PCCA 4-Cock Derby by fielding his signature Spartan's Blood. Newspaper publisher and veteran campaigner Jake Macasaet (Greenwood) and Jack Chung (Union JNL Gamefarm) trail Briones in the PCCA series with 11 points each.

In winning the tough World Slasher championship at the Big Dome a few years ago, Briones entered only locally bred fighting cocks, beating the pure bloodlines of renowned American cocker-breeders and World Slasher champions Roger Roberts, Dan Gray, Carol Nesmith and Ray Alexander.

"I didn't expect to beat the American entries," he said humbly.

"But it's time to break the colonial mentality that imported cocks are unbeatable."

***

ESPINOSA SHOULD QUIT FOR GOOD. After losing badly to a much younger opponent in Stockton, California, the other day, I say Luisito Espinosa should quit the ring for good. Now an aging boxer at 37 (he will be 38 years old on June 26), Espinosa was knocked out in just three rounds by Cristobal Cruz, a virtually unknown Mexican fighter in his 20s.

Last Jan. 31, I wrote that Espinosa, a former World Boxing Council bantamweight and featherweight champions, need not fight anymore following a previous loss to Carlos Navarro, also of Mexico. But he needed the money so he was forced to fight again in order to make both ends meet. I said then that the present hardship which has befallen Espinosa is truly appalling. Needless to say, his most recent setback sickened me. Luisito has had enough. He should be retired.

Boxing is a cruel sport and the business of boxing is a hustler's domain.

Until now, Espinosa hasn't been paid his purse of more than $130,000 for successfully defending his WBC title against Argentina's Carlos Rios in Koronadal, South Cotabato, in December 1997. He left for the United States with wife Mariccherie and son John Louie in 1998. Two other children were born in the US in 2001 and 2003.

CONGRATULATIONS!
ADAMSON SOFTBELLES
UAAP
2003-2004 BACK TO BACK 2004-2005
CHAMPIONS

MEMBERS of the Adamson softball team celebrate their successful title defense at the expense of Santo Tomas U.

Lady Falcons sweep UAAP softball crown

CLOIENE Muyco combined perfect hitting and masterful pitching yesterday, powering Adamson to an 8-5 victory over University of Santo Tomas and a second straight UAAP women's softball crown at the Tigresses' home turf in Sampaloc, Manila.

Muyco, a 17-year-old prized find from Bacolod City, highlighted an immaculate four-of-four at bat with a two-run double in the first inning as the Lady Falcons greeted the Tigresses with blazing bats that gave them a huge 7-1 lead as early as the top of the second frame.

She went on to finish the Tigresses on the mound, yielding four hits and striking out five in a no-relief job.

Muyco was amply rewarded for her one-woman show. She captured the Most Valuable Player plum and picked up the Best Pitcher and Rookie of the Year titles for good measure.

*"Hindi ko in-*expect *na madadala ko ang* team (I did not expect to carry the team)," she said.

The softball title was the sixth overall for the Lady Falcons, who won the opener of the best-of-three championship series, 7-4, last Wednesday.

Adamson head coach Boy Codiñera said hitting proved the key for his girls.

"Buti na lang hindi nawala ang palo namin (We were lucky our hitting clicked)," said Codiñera, who has Jenny de Jesus as assistant coach.

Muyco's two-run blast sparked a three-run first inning for Adamson. After UST responded with a solitary run in its half of the inning, the Lady Falcons quickly bounced back with an even more vicious splurge—a four-run rampage that swelled the lead to 7-1.

Tanauan Active chess registration on

REGISTRATION has started for the 1st Tanauan Chess Open-Mayor's Cup, the country's biggest Active chess tournament slated March 4-5 at the Speaker Jose Laurel Memorial Gymnasium in Tanauan City.

The two-day event dangles a cash pot of P200,000, with the champion pocketing P100,000. The second placer gets P40,000; third, P20,000; fourth, P10,000; fifth, P5,000; 6th-10th, P2,000 each; and 11th-20th, P1,000 each.

Cash prizes will also be awarded to the top performers in the Under-2000, Under-1800 and Under-1600 classes.

Registration includes an entry fee of P750 plus a default fee of P250. Membership with the National Chess Federation of the Philippines is required.

Made possible by the First Asia Institute and the city government of Tanauan, the event is being organized by the Active Chess Center of Asia (ACCA).

For inquiries, call the First Asia Institute at 043-7780656 and 7781529 local 106, or 0927-4116906 or 0918-6966581, or e-mail acca@info.com.ph.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Monday, February 21, 2005

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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandara's Romance	Masked Rider Ryuki		Gatekeepers	TV Patrol		Spirits	Krystala	'Til Death Do Us Part	Hiram	Save The Last Dance	OK Fine! Whatever			Insider
NBN	Value Vision				Teledyaryo	Value Vision	Next Stop			Network Forum		Teledyaryo		The Working President	Concert at the Park			Dial M	
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	Art Is-Kool	Anime Ring Keisho		Anime Ring Keisho		Sentro	Friends	The Apprentice				Big News	Pops!		Extreme Island	Billboard On-Air
GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Joyride	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Knock Out	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin		Starstruck	Stairway To Heaven	Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	Wrestling		NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	Sex & the City		
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Lifestyle		Chowtime Na!		V League				Good Take	IBC News Tonite	Linawin Natin	
Solar		Wow		Slamball		Rastal	Zeta Project	Mucha Lucha!	Spiderman	Stargate SG1		WWE Special: Royal Rumble							
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Nick Mix						Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX		Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	OPM MYX Countdown		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		The O.C.		Saturday Night Live		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News	Knock First	Will & Grace	JKX	Last Comic Standing		Queer Eye For A Straight Guy		Who Wants To Marry My Dad		Nip/Tuck	
Cinema One		Sa Piling Ng Aswang		Ama, Ina, Anak				Anghel Sa Lupa				Mila				Abakada Ina			
Studio 23	Bewitched	Survivor Thailand						Ragnarok	Project Arms	Wazzup Wazzup	World's Craziest Video	Jake 2.0		Charmed		News Central			Travel Time
AXN		24		24		The Right Stuff II	Rated X	Samurai X	Samurai X	Beastmaster III		Fear Factor		The Outer Limits		24		24	
Star World	Weird TV	The Bold & The Beautiful		American Idol			That 70s Show	The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	American Idol			Frasier	The Casino		Friends	That 70s Show
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	Living Golf	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic		Killer Instinct		Secret China	Wildlife Diary	Planet Wild	Crittercam Wildtech Adventure	The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr. Brady Barr	Wild		About Asia		Nat Geographic Specials		Killer Instinct		Totally Wild	Wildlife Diary
Solar Sports		In This Corner		KOTV Classics		Freestyle Motorcross		Monster Jam		Sagupaan		NBa All Star Game					Greatest Game '03 NBA All-Star Game		
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Food 911	E! True Hollywood Special		BTVR	Lifestyle		Brini Maxwell Show	Modern Girl's Guide	Breathing Room	Genuine Article
HBO	Curse Of The Forty Niner (2.45 PM)			Weird Science (4.15 PM)				Maid In Manhattan (6.50 PM)			Spirit: Stallion Of The Cimarron (7.35 PM)			Striking Distance			Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade		
Star Movies		Lost Junction			Rocky (4.45 PM)					Starship Troopers				Alien				Aliens (10.55 PM)	
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Police Academy	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Static Shock	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Shaman King	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Codename Kids Next Door	Mr T	Josie And The Pussycats	Boomerang: The Superfriends	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN	Spanish Football League 2004/05				2004 Spinvitational Table Tennis C'ships	Winter X Games VIII Classic Ski Pipe & Slope		Big East Conf.: Connecticut vs. Providence				Sportscenter Taiwan	World Pool League '04 Warsaw, Poland		Big 10 Conf.: Michigan State vs. Purdue				Sportscenter Asia
Disney Channel	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	Lilo & Stitch/Untalkative Bunny	Ferngully: The Last Rainforest			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video	Land Before Time II: The Great Valley Adventure	
Cinemax		To Sir, With Love II			Tarzan And The Lost Safari			Trucks (6.15 PM)				Owning Mahowny			The Godfather (9.45 PM)				
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	Trail To Hope Rose				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Judging Amy		Child Of Our Time		Word Of Honor			Just Cause (10.35 PM)		Judging Amy (11.25 PM)
Discovery Channel		American Chopper		Extreme Engineering		Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Unsolved History				Boys Of H Company		Ultimate Discovery		Civilisations	
MTV Philippines			Hangin Out at MTV		MTV Most Wanted		TRL/Making the Video Maroon5 Sunday Morning	MTV Dyes		The Assistant	MTV Fashionista	Punk'D	Rich Girls	MTV Alive	Brand New	VH1 Video Collections			
Sports Plus			The Ace Group Classic Day3					Raceworld		Inside the PGA	WGC Champ Preview	Italian Serie A		NFL Delayed Telecast		Nissan Open Day4			
EWTN	St. Matthew	Angelus (3.15 PM)	Benediction And Devotion	Story Keepers	Image Of God	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Light Of The East II	Voices On Value	EWTN Gallery	Threshold Of Hope Encore		Sunday Night Live With Fr. Groeschel		Daily Mass		Angelus (10.15 PM)	G.K. Chesterton	Catholic Compass	

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Happy reunion for 'King,' Ladiana

By Edwin Villanueva, *Contributor*

EMPIRE KING's fans were right. Jeffrey "Jaja" Ladiana is what the 2004 Horse of the Year needed.

Ladiana took the reins again on the champion colt and the result was a resounding success as Empire King humbled West Bound in the 2005 Philracom Open race yesterday at the Santa Ana Park.

"*Ganadong ganado tumakbo. Parang alam niya ako ang nakasakay* (He really ran with gusto. As if he knew I'm riding him)," said Ladiana after Empire King bounced back from a recent setback under ace jockey Pat Dilema.

Getting the right pacing from Ladiana, Empire King just watched early leaders Paramount and Crystal Show in the early going, waited for West Bound's noted rally before charging home with still a lot of speed in reserve.

West Bound, the narrow loser to Empire King in the Presidential Gold Cup last year, matched Ladiana's mount stride for stride after both dispatched Paramount and Crystal Show at the far turn as the roaring crowd braced for another classic stretch duel between the two gallopers.

But Empire King, looking fresh at that point unlike in the "Karera Para sa Puso" where he charged down the wire on weary legs, unleashed the bigger strides to eventually win by a length.

The Lee Stable got the P300,000 first prize from the sponsoring Philracom as a result of the victory, Empire King's second in four starts this year.

West Bound, handled by Eldy Salvador, got P112,500. SEA Games Cup winner Palm It Off arrived third, four lengths off Empire King, and bagged P62,500, then came Paramount, Sound Offer and Crystal Show.

"The King is back!" hollered club announcer Ira Herrera as Empire King wrapped up the 1,800-meter race which the Perfect Halo-Carta Nueve progeny covered in 1:54.8 (13.5-23.5-25-28-27.5), besting the 1:55 effort he did in winning the Ongpin Cup last year.

"*Pag sa Santa Ana mahusay talaga ang ipinapakita niya* (He really performs well at Santa Ana)," added Ladiana, noting Empire King's other major wins like in the PGC, Marho Breeders' Cup Colt Mile, Horseman's Cup and Motolite Cup also came at the Makati racing venue.

Philracom chair Jimmy Dilag was joined in the awarding rites by commissioners Eddie Jose and Vergel Cruz.

EMPIRE King (4), with jockey Jeffrey Ladiana on board, holds off West Bound and Eldy Salvador. RYAN LIM

Fans realizing that the race would turn out a two-horse affair concentrated their bets on Empire King and West Bound who were sent out with sales of P575,239 and P512,115, as close first and second favorites, respectively.

Daily double sales grossed P1,329,931.

Empire King is slated to run next in the Freedom Cup on Feb. 25 and among his chief rivals will be West Bound's stablemate, Cover Girl, his tormentor in the "Karera Para sa Puso.

Dilag said the Philracom Open is among several major stakes races which the racing body is staging this year.

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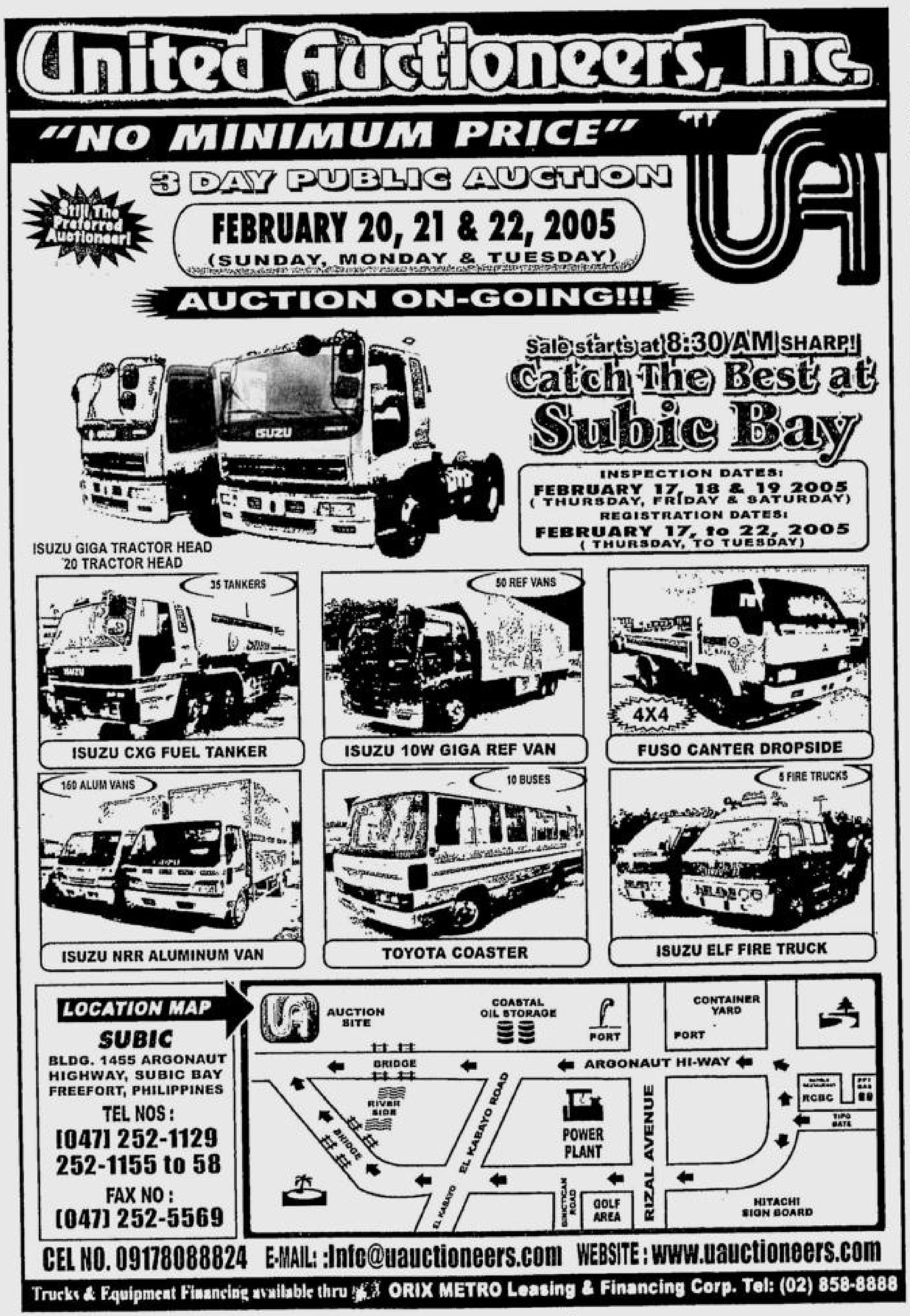
NBA All-Star today at NSG

NATIONAL Sports Grill witnessed a human traffic of football spectators as the Dining Choice of Champions and Sports Plus teamed up to host the Super Bowl XXXIX won by the New England Patriots over the Philadelpia Eagles recently.

To all sports fanatics who missed the fun and thrill of being there live, National Sports Grill and Solar Sports will team up once again to bring you the 2005 NBA All-Star Game to day at 9 a.m.

National Sports Grill, the dining choice of champions, is located on the third floor of Greenbelt 1, Ayala Center, Makati City.



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RP shooters gear up for world tilt

FORMER world champions Jeufro Lejano and Jerome Morales stand at the vanguard of the Philippine team campaign in the World Shoot XIV in Ecuador in August.

The marksmen topped their respective divisions after an eight-month, level-III qualifying matches staged by the Philippine Practical Shooting Association (PPSA).

Lejano and Morales were members of the RP team that won the gold medal in the World Shoot XII held in Cebu City three years ago, beating Brazil, South Africa and powerhouse US.

Joining Lejano in the modified division are Nelson Uygongco, Joseph Sy and Lyndon Biraogo.

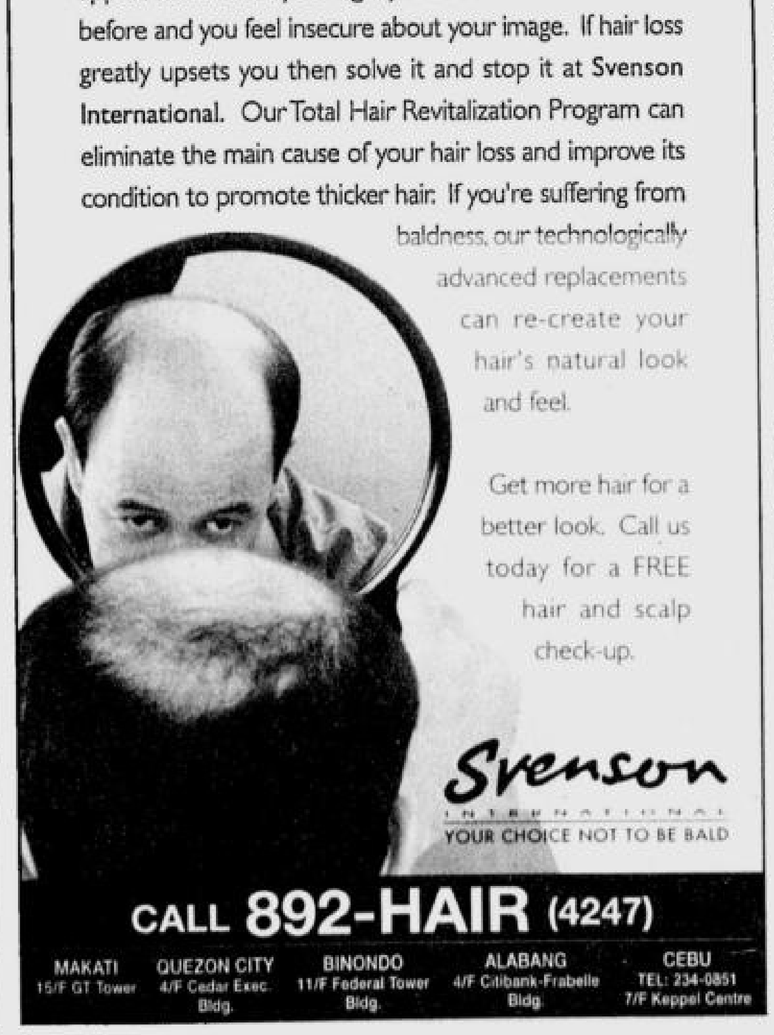
Morales made the grade in the production division along with Rosendo Castro, Winston Amigo Chan and Danny Torrevillas, while young guns Michael Ku, Christian Panganiban, Blairwin Ortega and LJ dela Cruz are entered in the Open division.

Other members of the 20-strong Ecuador-bound national team are Benjie Belarmino, Rommel Canlas, Alex Lao and Marlon Valencia in the standard division; father-and-daughter Mary Gracy and Roland Tan in the ladies Open and senior Open, respectively; Philip Chua (revolver) and Nolito Labroma (senior standard).

"With their preparation and skills, it will not come as a surprise if the Filipinos win again," said International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC) regional director Rep. Juan C. Ponce Enrile Jr.

The RP shooters successfully defended their AustralAsian crown last November in Indonesia. The AustralAsian Championship is held every three years.

Coach Jojo Naranjilla and PPSA area director Vic Mangibin will handle the training of the national team.



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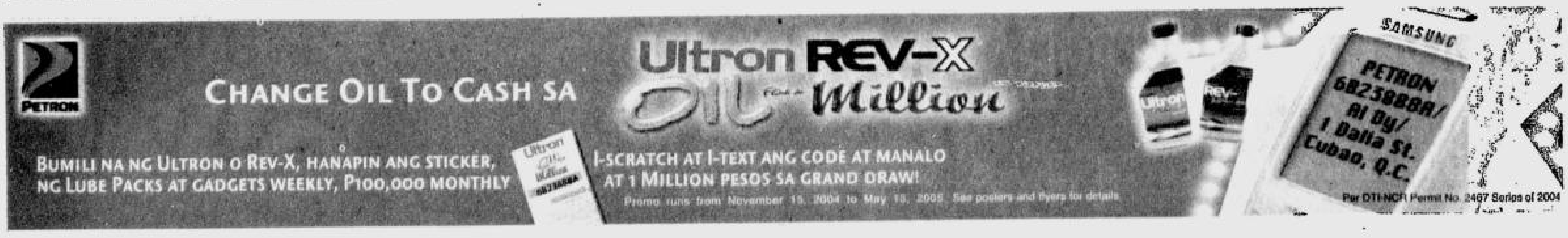

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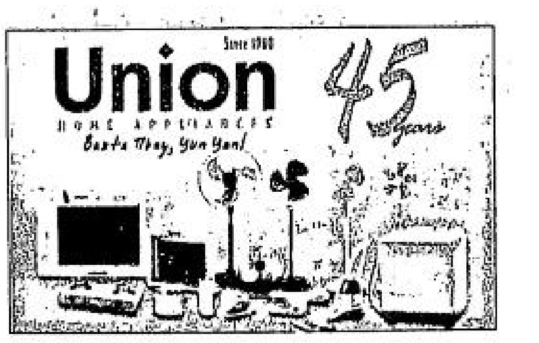
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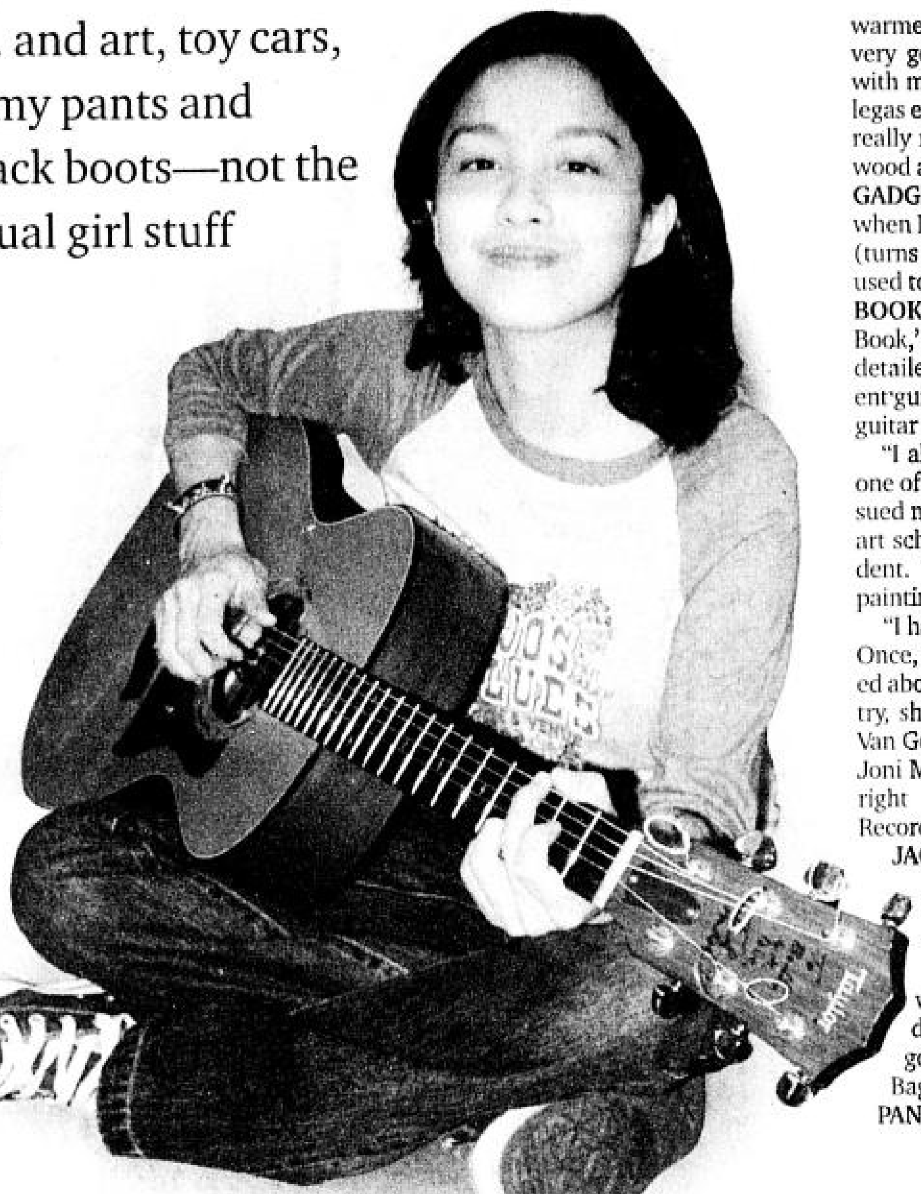
BARBIE: All about music

By Marinel Cruz
Photos by Raffy Lerma

. . . and art, toy cars, army pants and black boots—not the usual girl stuff

OUT OF THE CLOSET


A "RARE" Taylor acoustic guitar

BARBIE Almalbis, lead vocalist of the group Barbie's Cradle, used to have a hard time resting in her own bedroom.

This was because she would end up listening to music and playing instruments until the wee hours.

"I never got enough sleep," the pretty singer told INQUIRER Entertainment. "Then I read somewhere that one's room should be just a resting place and all other activities should take place elsewhere. So I took all the musical instruments out."

Barbie transformed a small area beside her bedroom into a music room. She had all the walls soundproofed, and the cabinets painted blue and pink. She decorated the room with snapshots of her friends and with her own paintings.

Tucked inside the cabinets are a couple of portable pianos and an accordion that she borrowed from her granddad. On the floor are a small stool and her guitars.

"It worked for me," she said of the new setup. "Recently, I installed a radio and speakers in the bedroom, but I turn the radio off when it's time to sleep."

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS. "The first musical instrument I played was my grandparent's piano in Roxas City. I still have my first electric guitar, a 1989 Fender-Stratocaster. My dad bought this for my birthday back in high school. But 10 or 11 days before my birthday, I did something bad in school and I got suspended, so I didn't get it exactly on my birthday. It's still my favorite. I'm really happy that my dad found a really good-sounding guitar. I use this for all of our band's recordings.

"I also have a Fender Squire Mini; it's only a week old. Top Suzara of Freestyle has a friend in the States whom I asked to buy this for me. This really fits me. People say it doesn't look 'mini' if I'm the one using it.

"I've been using the acoustic guitar a lot lately. But this black electric guitar is what I use for gigs. It's a Parker Fly. When it first came out, it was advertised as being the lightest guitar in the world. It weighs only five pounds. It's made of graphite, which is lighter than wood.

"Different kinds of wood give different sounds. The darker the color of the wood, the warmer it sounds. I also have a Taylor Guitar, a very good sounding acoustic guitar. It's been with me for about five years now. Michael Villegas encouraged me to buy this. He said this is really rare. Taylor does not use this particular wood anymore."

GADGET. "I have this tiny amplifier that I use when I practice. Its so small but it really works. (turns the amp on) It gets really loud when I used to sing inside my room."

BOOKS. "I got this book, 'The Ultimate Guitar Book,' for my birthday last year. It has a very detailed history of the guitar, pictures of different guitar designs, and stories of all the famous guitar makers.

"I also have a book on Joni Mitchell. She is one of my favorite songwriters. Before she pursued music, she was actually a painter. She left art school for music, where she really made a dent. The book contains a collection of her paintings and lyrics of some of her songs.

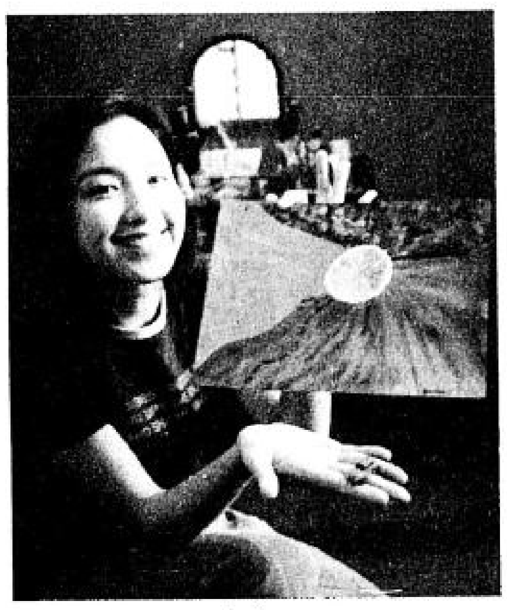
"I have a wall calendar of Van Gogh's works. Once, when Joni Mitchell was very disappointed about what was going on in the music industry, she expressed her feelings by painting in Van Gogh's style. Van Gogh cut his right ear, so Joni Mitchell painted herself with a bandaged right ear. I bought the calendar at Tower Records."

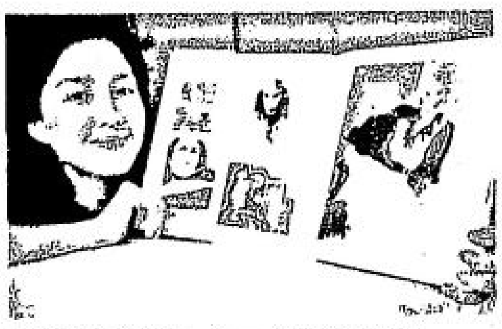
JACKETS. "I like this jacket because it's unique. I first used this for a magazine pictorial. It's leather. It's quite thick. I still use this, but only when it's really cold.

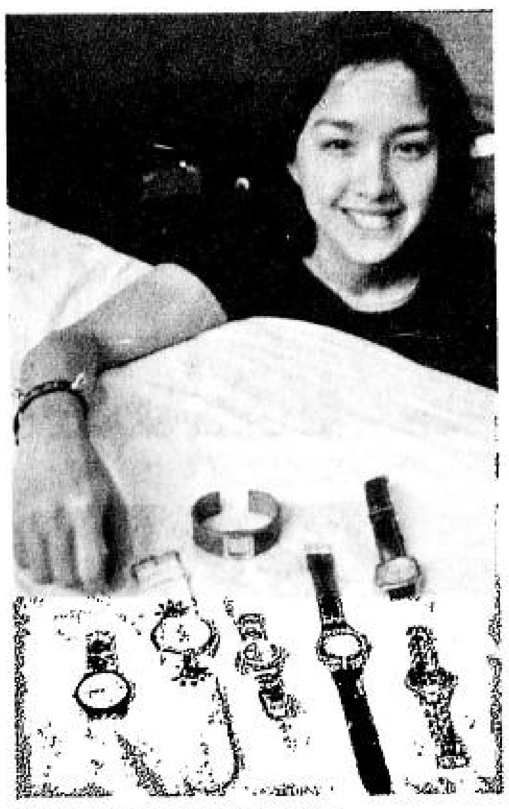
"This denim jacket is one of my favorites because of the Marilyn Monroe design. Not so many people have this. I got this from an *ukay-ukay* (flea market) in Baguio."

PANTS. "This is a pair of real army pants. My

BARBIE/ A2-2


ONE OF her own paintings

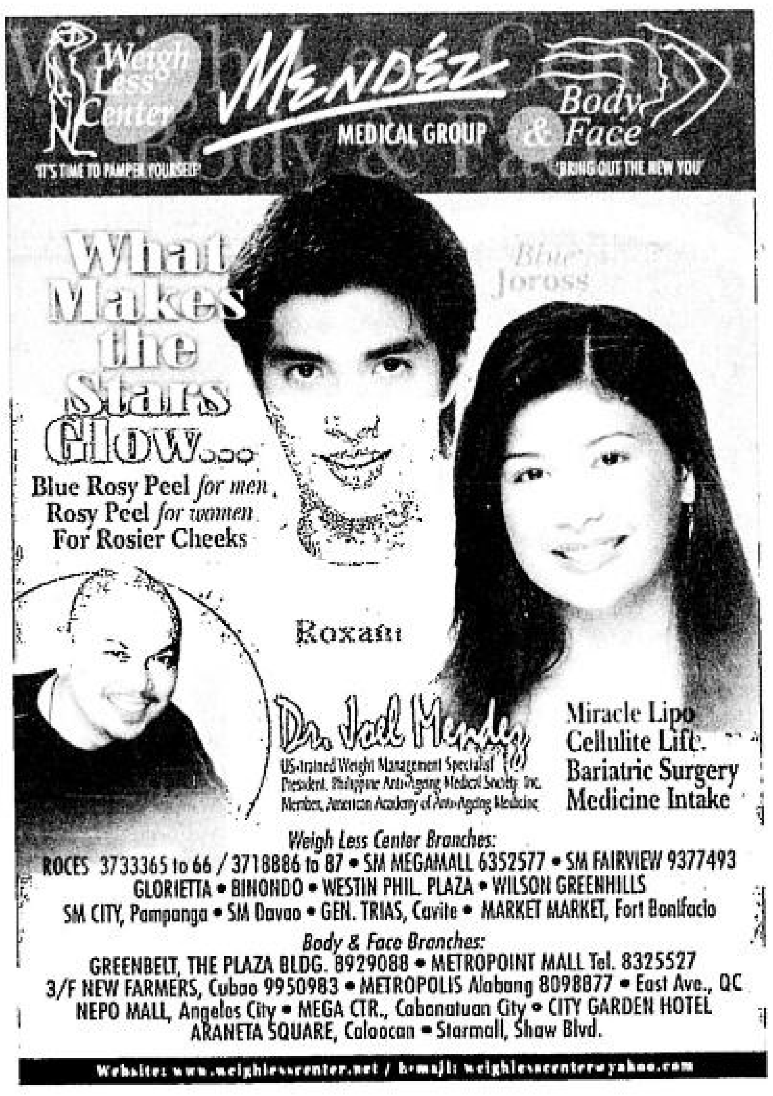

HER BELOVED book on Joni Mitchell


MOST of her watches are gifts.

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Who's afraid of Oprah Winfrey—and kissing on-cam? /A2-6

■ 2 critics slug it out over Oscar picks /A2-4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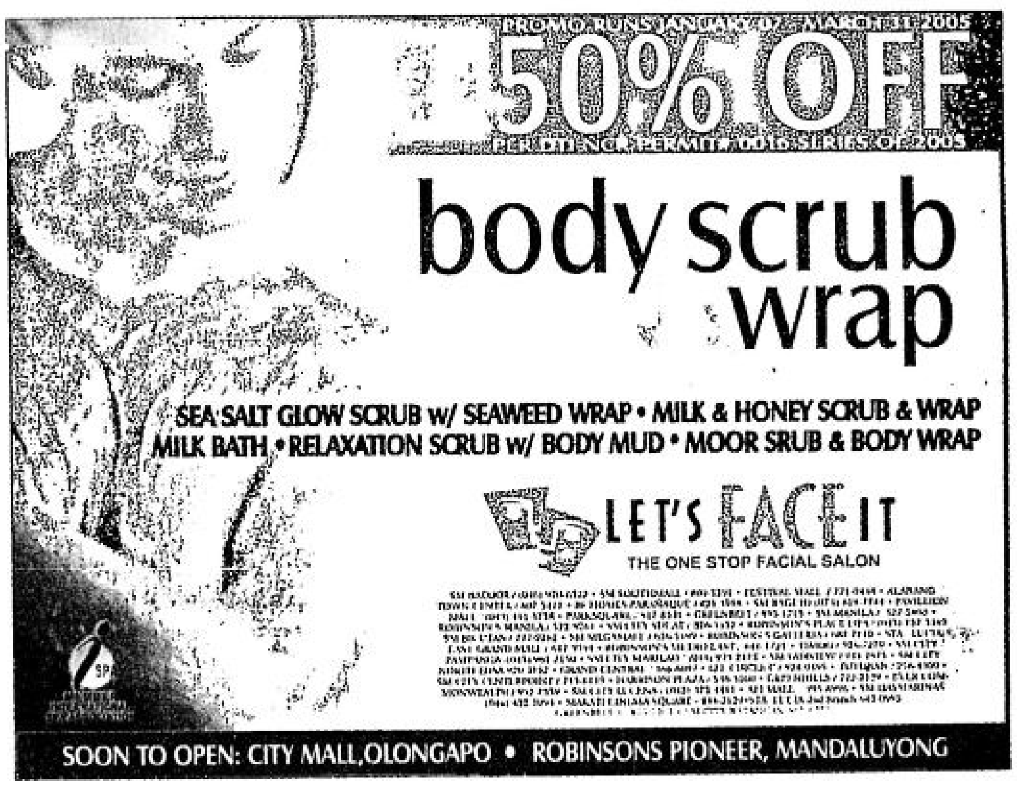
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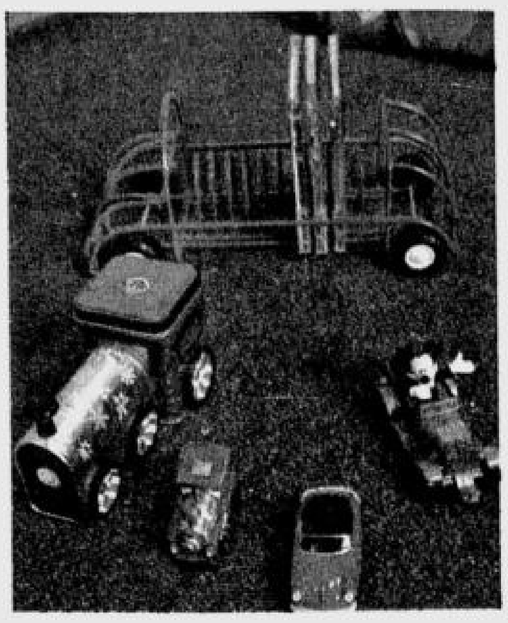


WHY DOES she like toy cars, trains and anything with wheels? She wants to learn how to drive in earnest.

"THE ULTIMATE Guitar Book" was a birthday gift. It has photos of guitar designs and stories of "all the famous guitar makers."

BARBIE: All about music

From page A2-1

former band mate, Ricky, bought it in the States. I think he found it in a thrift store. This is really old. It fits me well. I didn't need to have it altered. They probably have small soldiers, too (laughs).

"I use this when I go to practice, usually with a shirt or a tank top. It's very casual."

SKIRT. "I've been getting a lot of clothes lately from A Store With No Name. They're my friends. They pretty much know my taste. The clothes there are all customized. Like this skirt made out of excess fabrics. The designer knows my personality. I like the color combination.

TOPS. "This top is also from A Store With No Name. The design is very unusual. I like what it says: 'If you don't have anything nice to say, it better be funny.' It's already very stylish so I match it with my denim skirt.

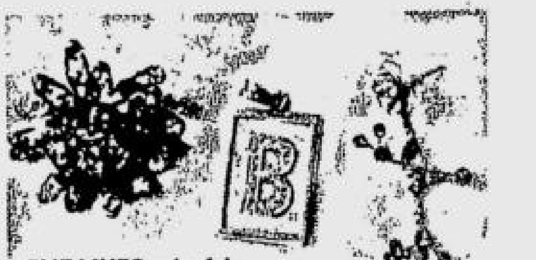
"This blouse came from India. I got it from a friend. I wore this in one of our videos. It's very beautiful. I like the design. I like the fabric. It was my favorite for a while. Now I'm letting it rest.

"I like this other top because it reminds me of Cyndi Lauper in the '80s. I bought this from a friend, too. I'm really into supporting a lot of local stores and designers. This is not locally designed but I bought this from a friend who owns a store."

TOYS. "This is my Radio Flyer wagon. It carries some of my stuff. I'm into wheels. I also have this miniature car that I use as my guitar pick holder when we practice. Even my CD rack resembles a small truck.

"I got my Mickey Mouse toy car from a thrift shop that sells second-hand stuff. The miniature red car was a Christmas gift from Julius,

BARBIE/ A2-7



SHE LIKES colorful accessories . . . and leather straps.

SHE KEEPS it casual, with genuine army pants and, uh, that's a skirt.

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10 CONSTANTINE
11 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
12 MEET THE FOCKERS

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12 LET THE LOVE BEGIN

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11 DREAMBOY
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2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
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6 SHALL WE DANCE
7 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
8 5 CHILDREN AND IT
9 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
10 ELEKTRA

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5 MEET THE FOCKERS
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7 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
8 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
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2 SHALL WE DANCE
3 DREAMBOY
4 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
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2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3 DREAMBOY
4 CONSTANTINE

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2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
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4 MEET THE FOCKERS

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4 DREAMBOY

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PHANTOM OF THE OPERA PG13 1:30,4:20,7:10,10:00	RAY PG13 1:15,4:15,7:15,10:20	SHALL WE DANCE GP 1:00,3:15

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PG-13

2 CONSTANTINE
10:55, 1:45, 4:35 7:25, 10:30
PG-13

3 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
10:55, 1:55, 4:55 7:55, 10:50
PG-13

4 SIDEWAYS
11:30, 2:20, 5:10 8:00, 10:40
PG-13

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3 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
MTRCB (PG - 13)

4 R A Y
MTRCB (PG - 13)
12:30, 3:35, 6:40, 9:45 LMF

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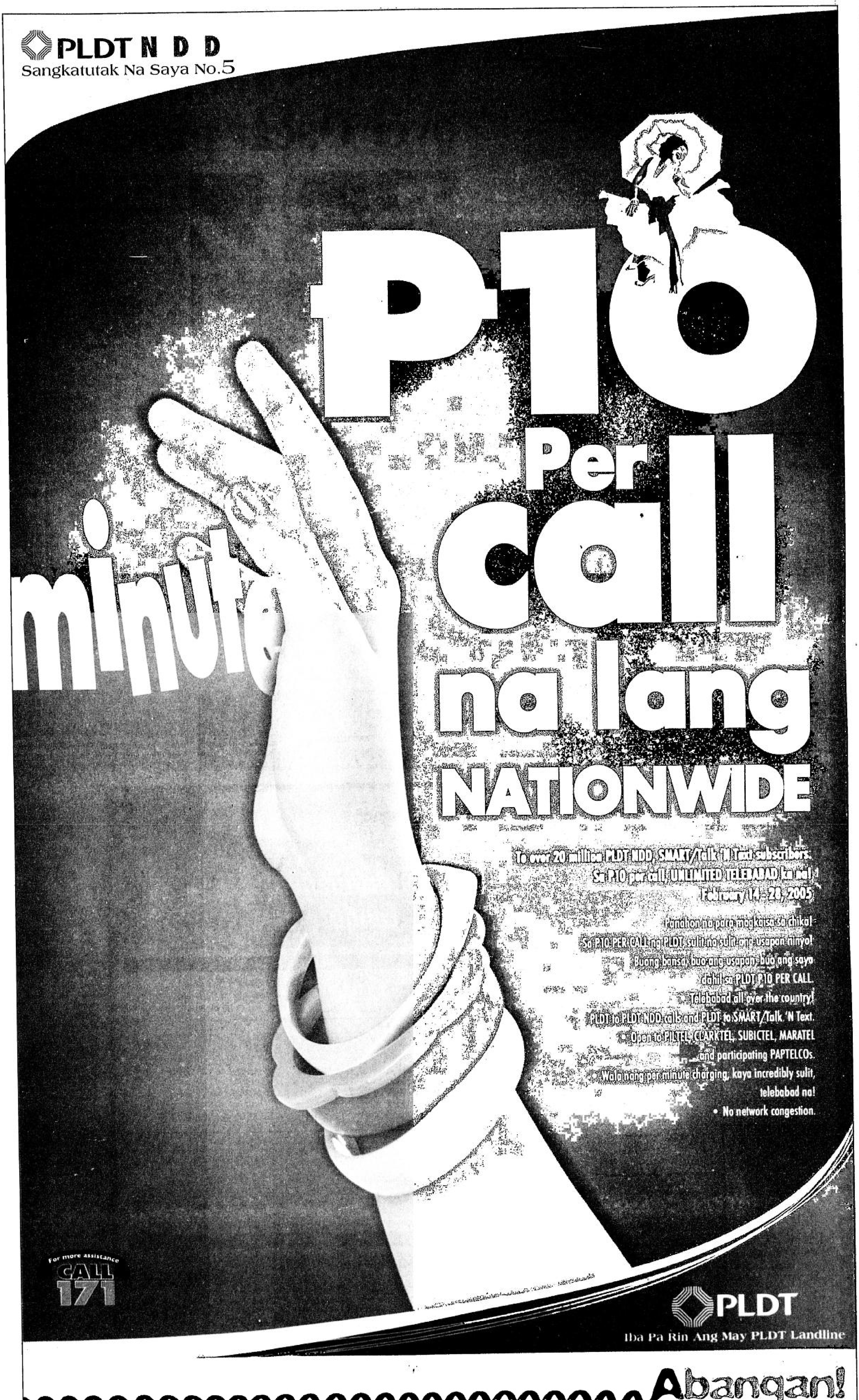

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Sangkatutak Na Saya Na May Kasunod Pa!

2 critics slug it out over Oscar picks

MARTIN SCORSESE and Leonardo DiCaprio turn out "a masterfully orchestrated film." PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.HOLLYWOOD.COM

NEW YORK—Last year, it was obvious that the hobbits and elves would rule Oscar night. This Academy Awards race looks tougher to call. Associated Press movie writers David Germain and Christy Lemire duke it out over several of the main categories:

BEST PICTURE Nominees: "The Aviator," "Finding Neverland," "Million Dollar Baby," "Ray," "Sideways."

GERMAIN: After seesawing from "The Aviator" to "Million Dollar Baby," I'm back on board with Martin Scorsese's biopic of Howard Hughes. "The Aviator" may lack the emotional punch of "Million Dollar Baby," but it's an enormously admirable epic on a scale rarely seen today. Clint Eastwood's beautiful "Baby" might steal the trophy. The wonderful "Sideways," for all its darker undertones, has too comic a touch for the academy's drama snobs. "Ray" will earn its big prize for Jamie Foxx.

LEMIRE: "The Aviator" is a gorgeous film—a technical triumph on every level—but it's ultimately hollow. You walk out afterward visually dazzled but no different than you were three hours earlier. "Million Dollar Baby" changes every molecule in your body, making you feel as if you've just gone 12 rounds, too. I'd love to see "Sideways" take it—lovely, subtle and poignant, it topped my top 10 list—but it's too small and too talky to win Best Picture.

BEST DIRECTOR Nominees: Martin Scorsese, "The Aviator"; Clint Eastwood, "Million Dollar Baby"; Taylor Hackford, "Ray"; Alexander Payne, "Sideways"; Mike Leigh, "Vera Drake."

LEMIRE: "Million Dollar Baby" wins and Eastwood wins. With his trademark spare style, he delivers a complete moviegoing experience, and it's astounding to see a filmmaker at the top of his game at age 74. Not to detract from Scorsese's achievement—the scope of his film and his obsessive eye for detail are unmatched. But "The Aviator" is simply not his best work. It's a travesty that Scorsese didn't win for "Taxi Driver" or "Raging Bull" or "GoodFellas," but I have a hard time accepting the theory that he will finally get his Oscar this year as a sort of Lifetime Achievement Award.

GERMAIN: "The Aviator" and "Million Dollar Baby" might end up splitting the picture and directing prizes, and if so, it's more likely Scorsese will win here while "Baby" takes best film. "The Aviator" has its flaws, but it's a masterfully orchestrated film, a blend of grand old Hollywood style and modern computer-generated trickery. Certainly, it's not "Raging Bull," but given that this is a two-man, dead-heat race, it may only take a few voters in the career-achievement mindset to throw the match to Scorsese.

BEST ACTOR Nominees: Don Cheadle, "Hotel Rwanda"; Johnny Depp, "Finding Neverland"; Leonardo DiCaprio, "The Aviator"; Clint Eastwood, "Million Dollar Baby"; Jamie Foxx, "Ray."

GERMAIN: Not a weakling among this group (though Paul Giamatti of "Sideways" should have nosed out DiCaprio for a nomination). Cheadle's brought his game to a new level, Depp's a marvel of repressed emotion, DiCaprio's a dashing dynamo and Eastwood would be a lock to win if not for Jamie Foxx and his extraordinary emulation of Ray Charles. It's almost supernatural, how Foxx captured the cadences, body language and spirit of the man. Add in the fond sentiment for Charles, who died last year, and there's no way Foxx can lose.

LEMIRE: Yeah, you're right, this one's easy. (And ditto on the Giamatti snub, I'm still drowning my sorrows in Pinot over it.) With Foxx, you completely forget you're watching an actor and believe you're watching Ray Charles. Cheadle makes a well-deserved name for himself, and Depp will get his due someday. *AP*

(To be concluded.)

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(Alabang) tel 850.1276
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2 SARANGANI
3 IMPOTENT MAN
4 (DTS) FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX

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4 DREAMBOY

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5 CHILDREN & IT 12:15 / 2:25 / 4:35
MEET THE FOCKERS 12:00 / 2.15 / 4:30 / 6 45 / 9 00
LET THE LOVE BEGIN 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30
DREAM BOY 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30
PHANTOM OF THE OPERA 1:00 / 3:50 / 6:40 / 9:30
SHALL WE DANCE 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30
VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT 6:50 / 9:30
ALI MALL CINEMAS
❶ LET THE LOVE BEGIN 11:00 / 1:20 / 3:40 / 6:00 / 8:20
❷ CONSTANTINE 11:00 / 1:15 / 3:45 / 6:15 / 8:45
❸ PHANTOM OF THE OPERA 11:50 / 2.40 / 5.30 / 8:20
❹ FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX 12.05 / 2:10 / 4:15 / 6:20 / 8:25
❺ DREAM BOY 11:00 / 1:20 / 3:40 / 6:00 / 8:20
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Who's afraid of Oprah Winfrey—and kissing on-cam?

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

MOST viewers appreciate **Oprah Winfrey** and her show, but some people get turned off by what they perceive to be a know-it-all attitude.

They feel that she's out of touch with reality, because she has an answer for everything, believes that she can help viewers solve all of their problems, and thus she oversimplifies life and its far from simple ramifications.

Despite these criticisms, however, many viewers still watch Oprah's show, to learn as much as they can from it.

OK, it's no panacea for the world's ills, but at least it's trying to do more than "The Buzz," right?

So, the compromise could be: Let's watch "Oprah" as enthusiastically as ever, but let's also remind ourselves that it can only help point us in the right directions, not do the traveling and searching for us.

Fine. Having said that, we'd like to thank Ms Winfrey for another year of good, involving and illuminating shows. The show continues to share valuable insights that helped us get a handle on the way we live our lives.

For instance, last month on Star World, "Oprah" strove to help viewers get over their "addiction" to "overworking, overspending and overeating.".

As Oprah and the show's guest experts saw it, people prone to engaging in those excessive activities needed to be helped in getting a hold of themselves, and the experts proceeded to do just that.

More recently, Oprah told the numbing story of a woman whose children had been killed, in a demented outburst of violence, by her own husband.

When the woman appeared on camera, she was emotionally drained and even admitted that she had contemplated suicide. To give her hope, Oprah introduced another guest who had experienced a similar trauma years before.

The second guest shared the insights she had gained with the passage of time, and everyone was moved.

Even more instructively, some weeks later, the same first guest was invited back to Oprah's show, to find out how she was coming along. She heartened Oprah and her viewers when she shared that she no longer thought of killing herself.

Oprah then surprised her by revealing that, when the suicidal woman had decided not to kill herself, she had influenced 19 similarly suicidal viewers to also give life another chance.

Oprah's guest was moved by the program host's revelation, and finally saw the immense power of television to persuade viewers to take decisive change of their lives, no matter how low they had sunk.

Best of all, Oprah had invited three of those 19 viewers her guest had "saved" to appear on the show.

As they expressed their thanks, we similarly thanked Oprah for constantly using her show to make the world a much better place to live in. Would that other TV hosts could be as eager to give and share!

Movie love scenes

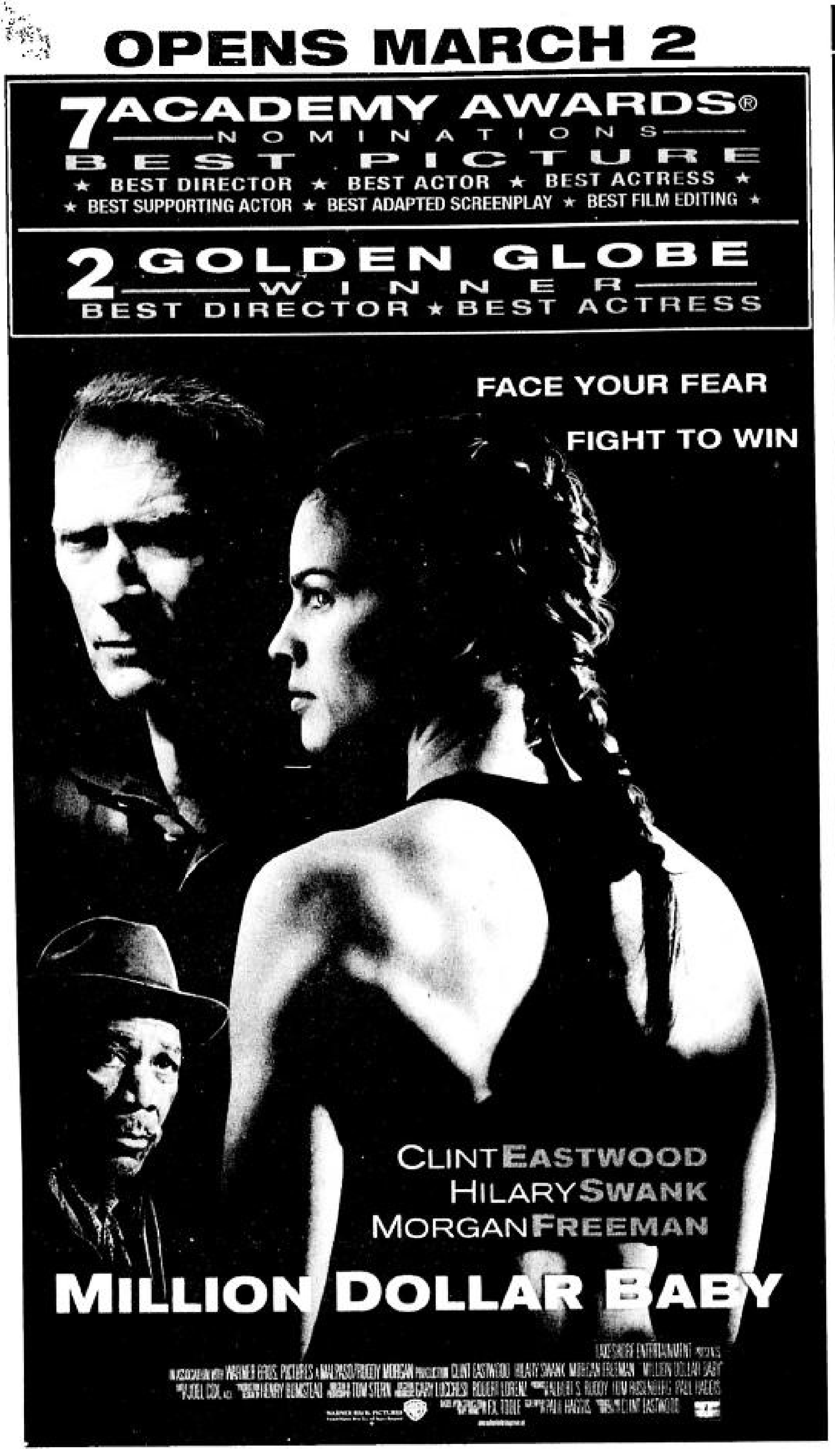
FILM buffs have their favorite movie love scenes, beautiful romantic interludes that sum up the ecstasy of *l'amour* at its most perfect. But shooting those inspiringly passionate scenes is often not as lovely as they appear. Take it from these stars, who've been there, and definitely done that:

Michael Douglas: Shooting love scenes is often awkward, and technically difficult: You've got to do acrobatics and contortions, so the lighting and camera angle are right. Sorry, guys, but love scenes are work!

Marcello Mastroianni: They're unnatural! You say things you never thought of, surrounded by people you don't know, to a girl you've met only a few days before. We Italians know that the real language of love is generally inarticulate. The words are breathy and broken, and often senseless. Yet I've been given romantic dialogue to do that reads like a political speech!

Shelley Winters: When I did "Lolita" with **James Mason,** I had to be given drugs to calm me down when I was doing a bed scene with him. In "Alfie," when I was supposed to be on top of **Michael Caine,** I had little pillows placed all over his body so we wouldn't touch. He was screaming so much with laughter, we almost didn't get the scene done!

Sandra Bullock: Movie sex scenes are never romantic, they're always very technical. I'm counting the beats —okay, we're supposed to kiss for two beats, then I say my line, then they want another kiss for four beats. It's like choreography. Sometimes, though, you have to work with actors who feel that it's their job to get as far down your throat as possible. You're like, excuse me, I like you, but not that much!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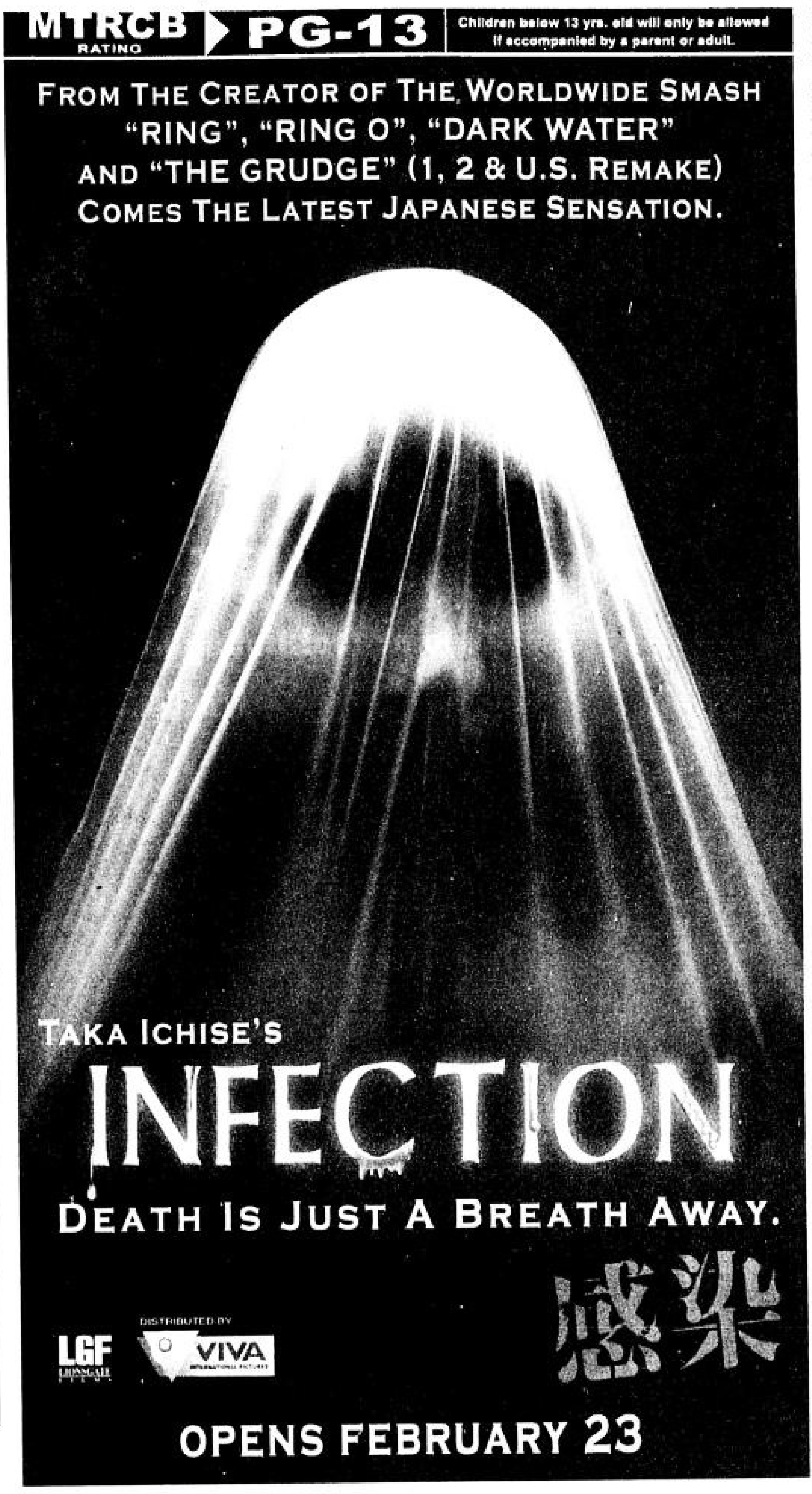
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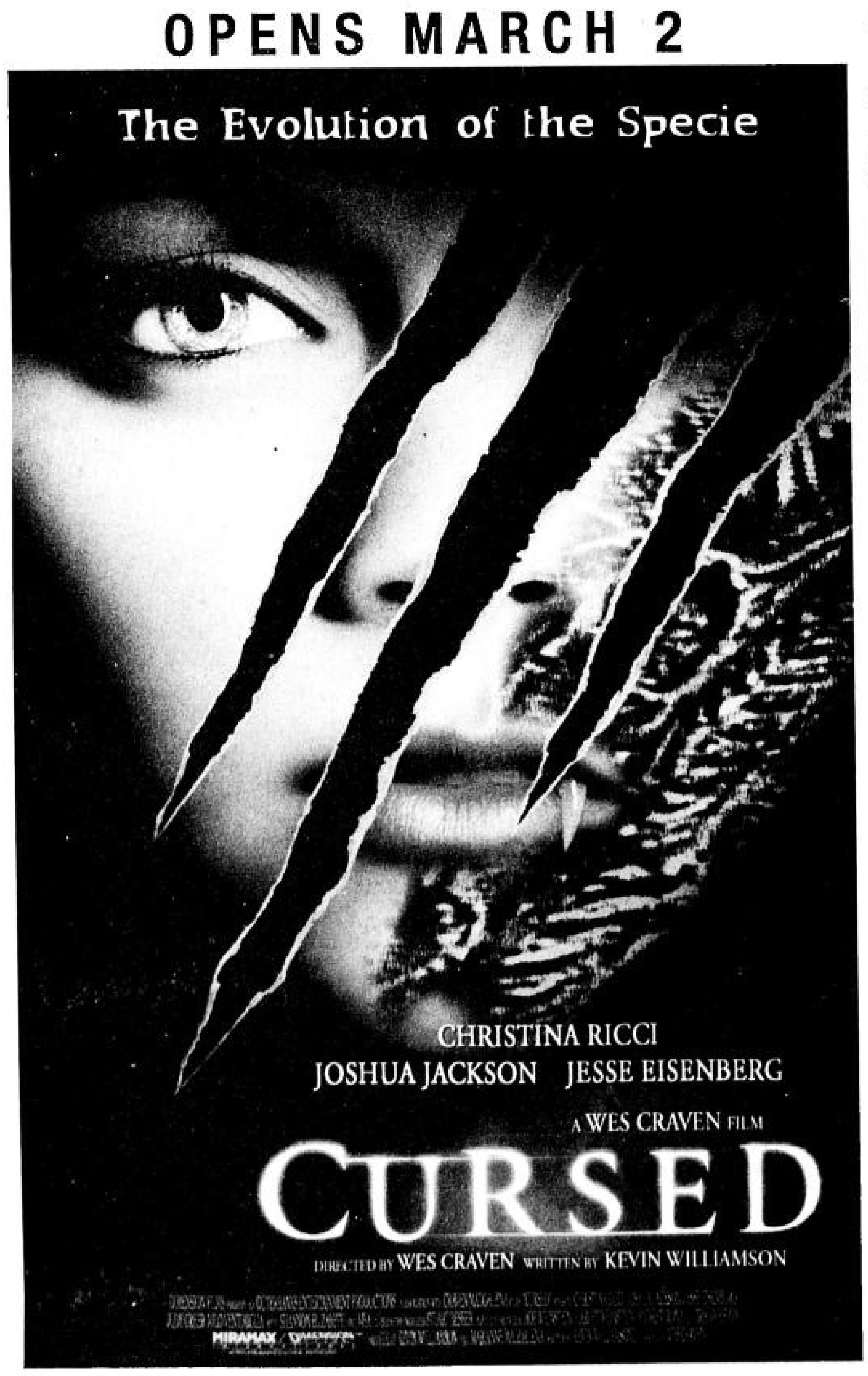
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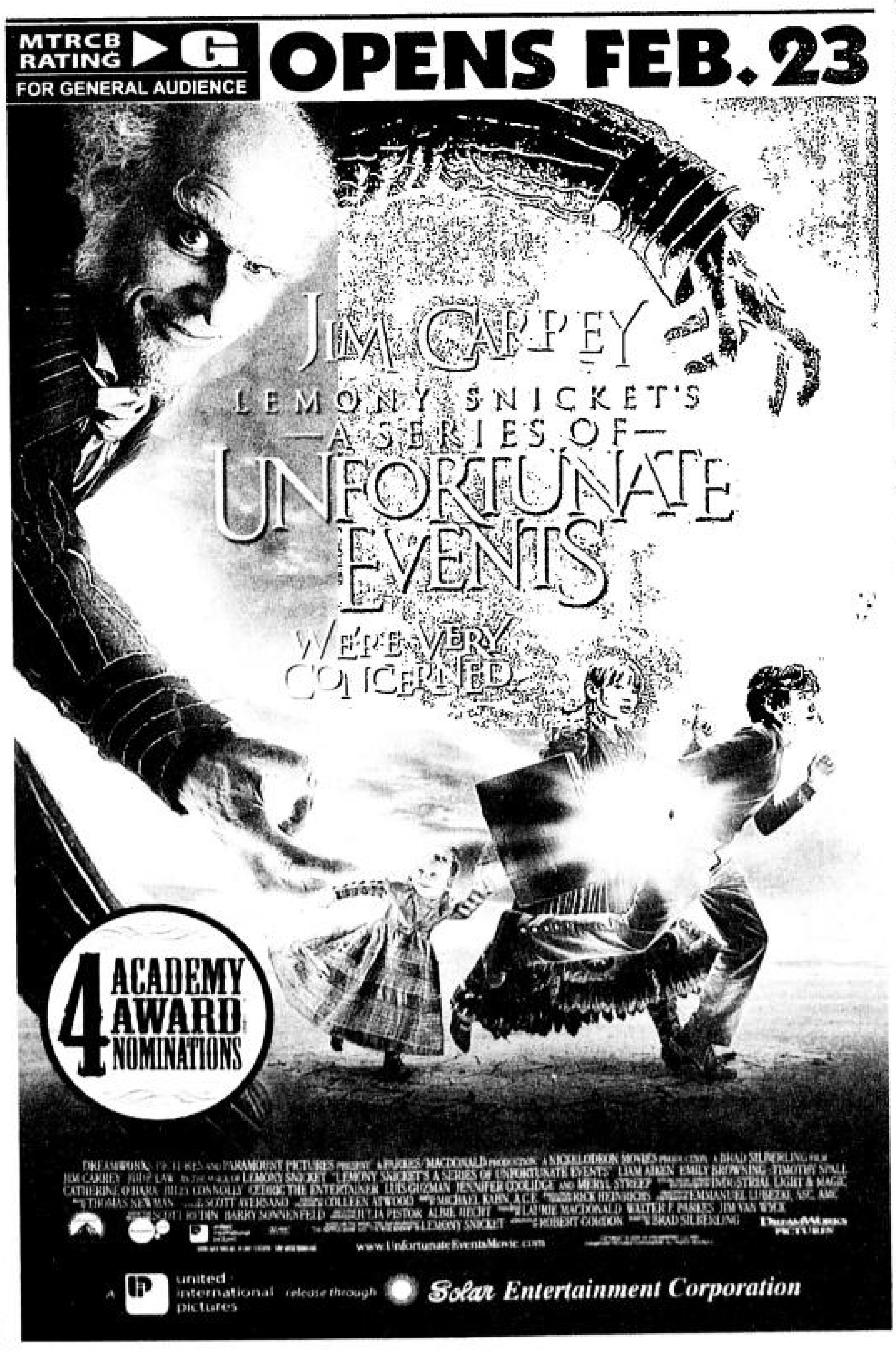
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THIS floor is littered with . . . guitars.

GRANDDAD lent her this accordion.

SHE LIKES jackets, too, especially this Monroe number.

COLORS in the shoe closet, but sneakers and boots rule

BARBIE: All about music

From page A2-2

the band's production assistant, two years ago. This looks exactly like the car we used in the 'All I Need' video.

"The toy train made from tin can is from Starbucks. I bought this in the States. It has a small battery-operated car inside.

"I also have a small car that eventually became the subject of one of my paintings. Initially, I wanted to glue it onto the paper, but I decided to just paint it. I bought this in Baguio. It's so cute. I think I bought this for P5.

"Why wheels? I have no idea. I guess it's because I want to learn how to drive. I know how to drive in the province, but I've never tried driving a car here in the city. That's one of my goals for the first half of the year. I will learn how to drive."

SHOES. "I always wear my pair of black leather shoes to school. It's made by a Filipino designer. I bought it in Firma two years ago.

"For shows, I like wearing black boots—a staple in my wardrobe. I feel like I have to buy a new pair *kapag nasira ang isa* (when one gets worn out). I asked a friend who went to New York to buy a pair for me. I'm not very particular about the style. I have boots that are square-toed, pointed and round. When I buy boots, I make sure I feel comfortable. I also consider the quality of the leather; it has to be really sturdy. I'd rather invest in expensive but good shoes than buy cheap ones that get damaged easily.

"I have two pairs of rubber shoes from Converse that I really like. One pair is similar to what boxers use. Converse found out that I had long wanted to have a pair like this, so they gave me one. The other pair is what I use to go to school. It's very versatile. And it's pink.

"I've had this pair of Doc Martens for 10 years. I still wear it because it never goes out of style. This brand is really reliable. This is really worth your money."

ACCESSORIES. "My current favorite is this silver hip-hop pendant from my aunt. I think it's a bling-bling. It's so cute.

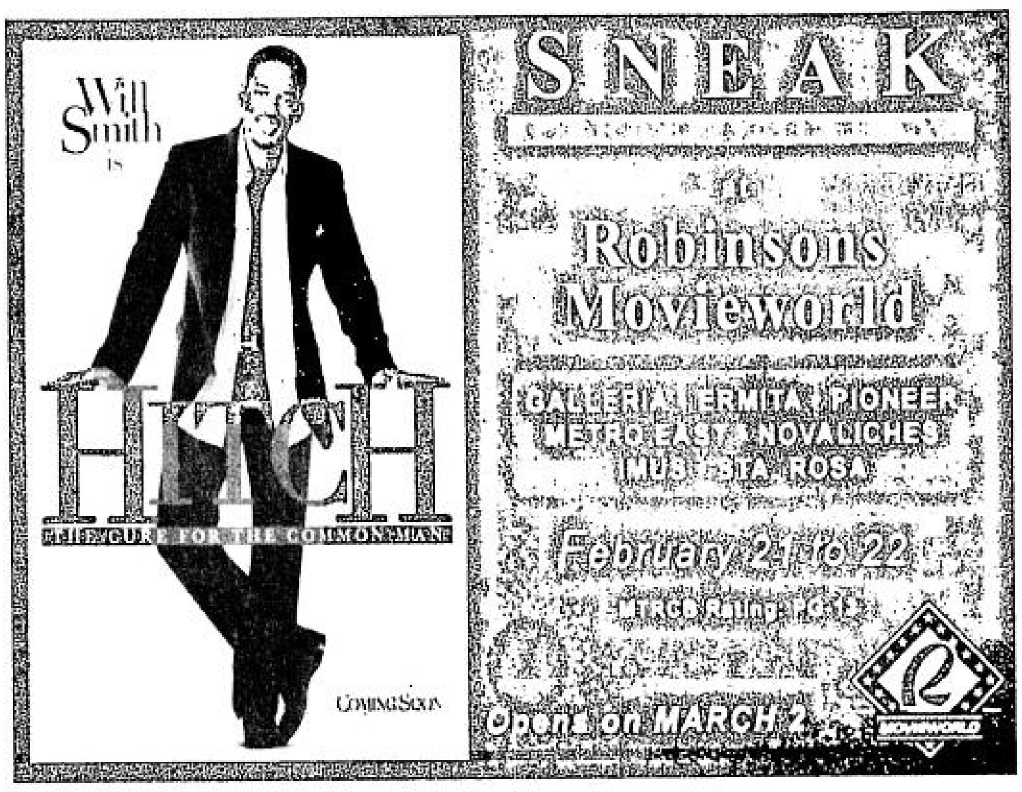
"I like colorful accessories. I'm also fond of wearing leather straps for gigs.

"Most of my watches are gifts from my dad, mom and friends."

BAGS. "This sling bag is from Warp. It's actually made from rags. Ronald Passion of Warp made this. I've had this since 1998.

"I also have a little black bag that I use when I only have to bring minimal stuff. It's so small, it can carry only my cell phone and wallet.

"I bring this Samsonite backpack to school everyday. I've had this for only two months. I was with my mom at the mall when I bought this. It has many compartments. It's actually made to carry a laptop. If you want to listen to music, it has a hole for the headphone. And I think it's made from a material that keeps water out but allows the air to come in."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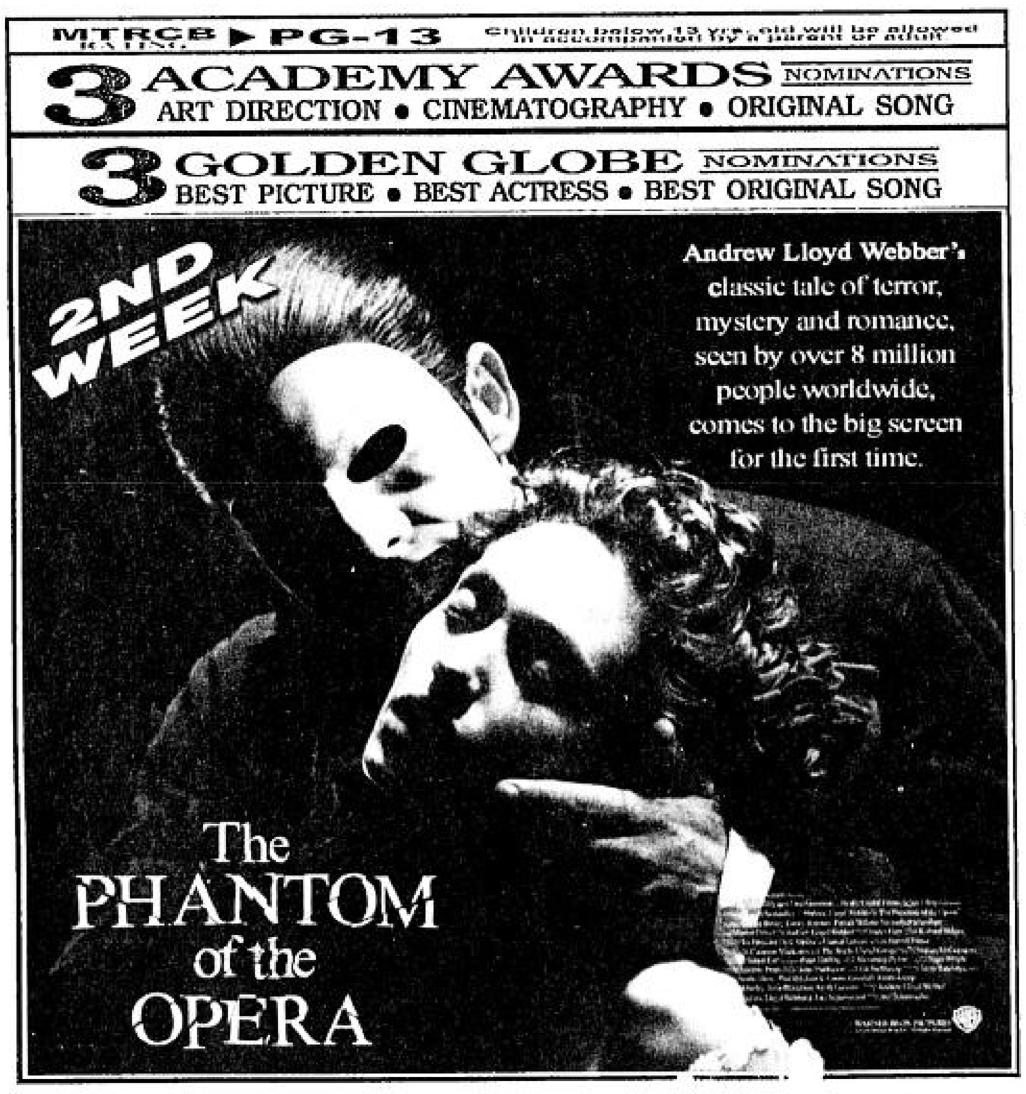
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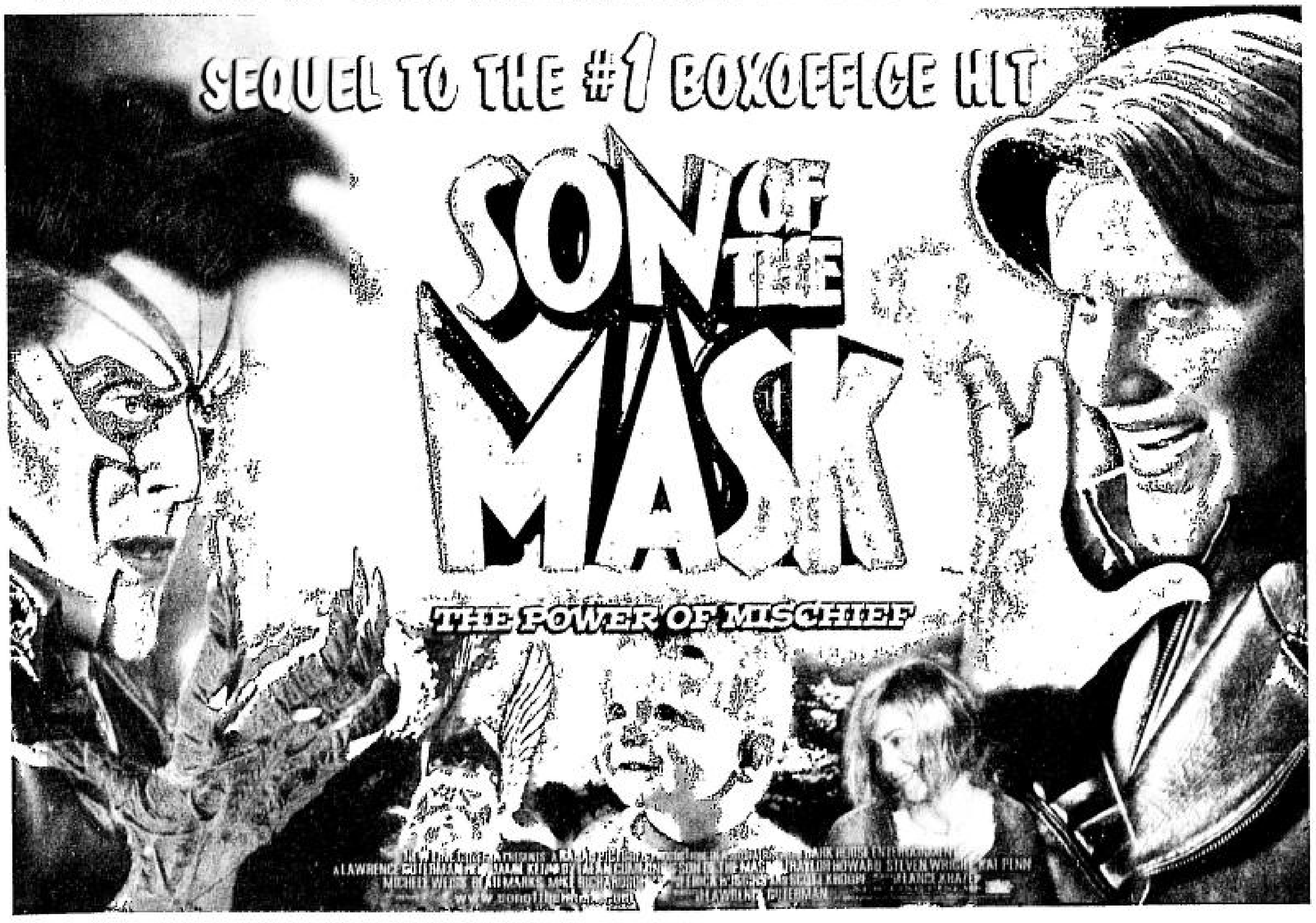
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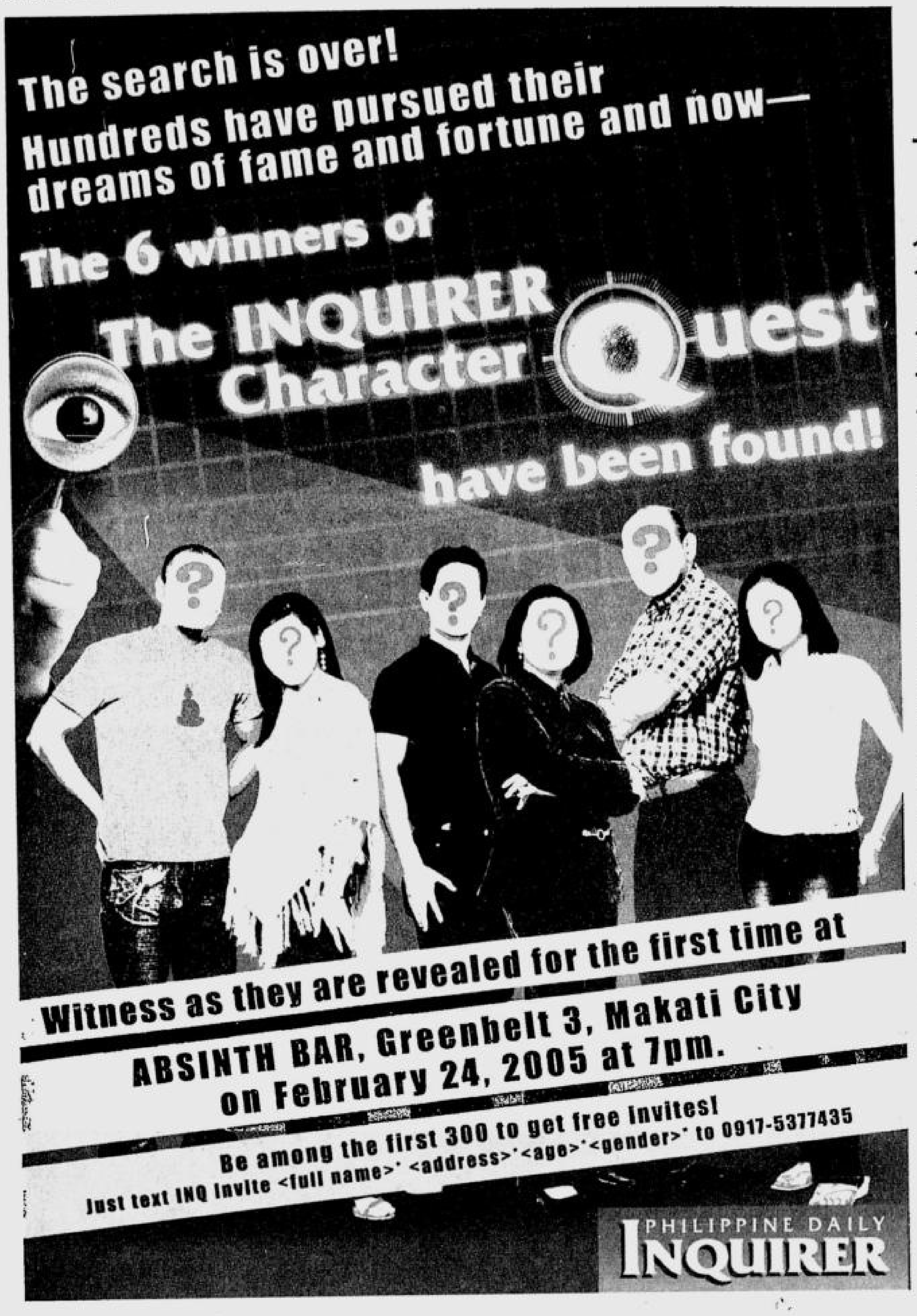
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ENTERTAINMENT

ABS-CBN execs to meet talent managers tomorrow

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Contributor

CHARO SANTOS-CONCIO: swift action from this ABS-CBN executive vice president and head of Entertainment

SWIFT, sure action like this one may yet be show biz's saving grace.

ABS-CBN executives are set to meet the leaders of the Professional Artist Managers,

Inc. (Pami) today, only one working day after the group of local artists' managers sent the network a letter requesting for a dialogue.

On the table: Pami's grave concern over recent unsavory scandals brewed and bred in entertainment talk shows.

Power panel

The network panel will consist of executives Charo Santos-Concio, executive vice president and head of Entertainment; Cory Vidanes, senior vice president for TV; Enrico Santos, vice president for Creative Synergy; and Deo Endrinal, vice president for Talk, Variety and Reality.

The meeting will be held at the ELJ Building, ABS-CBN compound in Quezon City.

Pami sent the same letter to executives of GMA 7, IBC 13, RPN 9 and ABC 5.

Grateful, hopeful

Pami president June Torrejon-Rufino said she was grateful "for ABS-CBN's positive and immediate response."

A two-part story in INQUIRER Entertainment titled "Presence of malice," published on Feb. 17 and 18, started the ball rolling.

Rufino told INQUIRER: "[They] called us right away. It proves that the network is [willing to work] with us... that we can all participate in a positive and constructive dialogue."

"We just want a clarification on the standards by which the staff is guided in handling stories," explained Shirley Kuan, a Pami founding member.

Others next?

The managers said they hoped to hear from the other networks soon.

"This is not just about taking care of our stars," said Ed Instrella, another founding member. "We also want to protect televiewers... and the whole industry... from the effects of lurid gossip being served up on almost a daily basis on local television."

Instrella conceded that some show biz personalities are willing victims of the scandal shows, and that they may, in fact, be concocting the controversies "to jump-start waning careers."

"As a matter of policy," Kuan points out, "we don't give out information on the personal lives of our clients. We give priority to professional matters. It has never been our practice to talk about our stars' personal problems."

"Television audiences shouldn't let the talk shows deceive them," Kuan asserts. "There are still a lot of decent, hard-working people in the industry."

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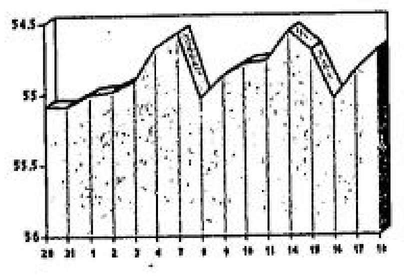

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By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance and the Senate committee on ways and means are out to ease the impact of the increase in the value-added tax on the purchasing power of strapped families by exempting them from paying income taxes.

The DOF and the Senate committee are now looking at a proposal to lift the tax burden on households with at least six members earning an annual income of P120,000 and below.

According to Cesar Purisima, DOF chief, finance officials and the members of the committee on ways and means have come up with the idea amid stiff opposition from the proposal to raise the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent.

Critics, especially by militant groups, have described the proposed VAT increase as anti-poor.

"Based on the poverty data, we believe that for a family of six to live decently, you need to earn at least P120,000 a year," Purisima said during a press briefing Friday. "We want to make sure that that amount of income is not taxed, and we are looking at how (we can) minimize the impact of additional VAT on a family of six."

But the DOF still has to make sure that the government's income tax collection will not be eroded, Purisima said.

If families currently belonging to the bottom of the income tax bracket were to be exempted from the in-

GOV'T/ B9

PURISIMA

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NEA posts financial turnaround, nets ₱2M

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE NATIONAL Electrification Administration reported it had overcome a six-year financial hemorrhage that ran into billions of pesos as it posted a net income of P2 million in 2004.

NEA said in a statement the amount was a dramatic recovery from the P6-billion net loss it suffered in 2003.

In a statement, NEA administrator Edith Bueno said the turnaround was brought about by the fiscal discipline the agency followed since the enactment of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act in 2001.

The law mandates the reorganization of NEA as well as the disposal of some of its idle assets.

Bueno said NEA's recent organizational restructuring drastically cut its workforce by 57 percent, which led to savings of some P237 million in 2004. She explained that before streamlining NEA, the agency's budget for personnel expenditures was pegged at P326 million.

Also, about P20 million allocated for operational expenses was left untouched "due to NEA's strategic move to close down its regional facilities and warehouses."

Further, major reforms such as the restructuring of loan arrearages of 11 electric cooperatives to improve their financial standing and cope with their maturing obligations to NEA improved significantly NEA's financial position, Bueno added.

"The implementation of Epira has pushed NEA to become more responsive to the needs of the electric cooperatives to help them become competitive under a deregulated power industry," she said.

Bueno said cooperatives gearing up for competitiveness within the deregulated environment may now avail themselves of three additional windows opened by the NEA, namely: equity financing scheme; single-digit systems loss program, and short-term credit facility.

NEA and the country's 119 electric cooperatives have already extended the benefits of electrification to 36 million people in 32,950 barangays and 1,452 towns and cities.

The government aims to provide electricity to all of the country's 42,000 barangays within the decade.

Bueno said the continuing energy conservation and austerity program that Malacañang has been advocating also contributed notably to the savings incurred by the agency.

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DOTC wants LRT-1 expansion deferred due to fund lack

By Clarissa S. Batino

LRTA aims to beef up its fleet by acquiring 12 new trains. PDI PHOTO

THE DEPARTMENT of Transportation has directed the Light Rail Transit Authority to scrap or at least defer the P9-billion capacity expansion of LRT Line 1 for lack of budget.

Unless the railway agency could find other sources of financing to address the budget gap, according to a senior transport official, the project should be deferred.

Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza wrote the LRTA board last week to inform the agency that the government has no budget to finance the Line 1 capacity expansion project, according to Transport Assistant Secretary Roberto Castañares.

The official said the LRTA could use the proceeds of a 12-million euro loan from Belgium to finance the repair of 22 broken trains. The P9 billion in fund needed for the expansion will be spent mainly for the acquisition of 12 units of four-car trains.

But the World Bank, through investment arm International Finance Corp., is pushing for the $150-million Line 1 upgrade to be funded by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, according to LRTA.

The government earlier scrapped coast guard and airport projects also under JBIC financing. The Japanese financing agency had committed to lend 18 billion yen (roughly P9 billion) mainly to increase Line 1's passenger capacity from 27,000 per hour per direction to 40,000 passengers per hour per direction.

"We would like to advise the LRTA board and management that the timely completion of the capacity expansion program is one of the major conditions in and part of the government's obligations under the proposed public-private partnership with SNC-Lavalin for the project," Sanjay Grewal, IFC program manager for advisory services in Asia said in a letter to the LRTA board.

The IFC is the government's consultant in the extension of the LRT Monumento-Baclaran line to Cavite.

Grewal said the "proper operation of an extended integrated line requires the existing line's capacity and performance to be consistent with the project design."

"We respectfully request the LRTA and the Philippine government to reach an early resolution of this matter," he added.

Castañares said the LRTA might have to defer the Line 1 capacity expansion until the government's finances improved. He said that of LRTA's 91 trains, only 66 were running. With 22 trains stalled, he said the railway agency had been incurring losses.

Mendoza said that of the P3.1 billion budget for foreign-assisted projects next year, the transport department could only provide a P25-million budget cover for the Line 1 expansion.

Castañares explained that under the revised budget and finance department's guidelines, the projects financed by official development assistance would have to secure a full budget cover in the duration of the project and not just a budget for the counterpart funding.

In short, the P9-billion Line 1 capacity expansion would have to secure a budget cover for the entire amount while the project is being undertaken.

"Implementing agencies are now required to include in their multi-year program the entire loan amount including the counterpart portion before a project is implemented," explained the transport official.

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What's in a bomb?

MINDANAWORLD

Joji Ilagan-Bian

AMIDST the romance and the fun of celebrating Valentine's Day, we had a bomb explosion right here in our city. Almost at the same time, there were other bombings in nearby General Santos City and in Makati.

At that very moment, I am sure that many of us Dabawenyo's paused and did some serious thinking. Will we let this bomb ruin our lives again? Will we allow this bomb to dampen our spirits once again?

The very next day, the tourism sector, headed by everyone's favorite Davao Tourism president, Art Boncato, gathered and discussed among themselves the necessary actions to be taken to send out the message that there was nothing to fear from this bomb. The entire tourism team appeared in a media forum at the Marco Polo and enthusiastically announced that, despite the recent incident, not a single cancellation of rooms occurred, or of any forthcoming conference or event. Occupancy rates remained at an all time high.

As with our neighbors in General Santos, the Dabawenyos' ability to withstand trials and difficulties will once again be put to the test. Our experience in hurdling even bigger problems in the past should allow us to rise to the challenge with relative ease this time around.

All that we need to do is to unite ourselves once more and to show the world that Davao remains the most peaceful and livable city. The task of confidence building must and should start from each and every one of us living here. Together, we have to show the world that business is still brisk in Davao, that tourists still continue to come and enjoy our beaches and our mountain resorts, as well as the abundance of fruits and flowers.

We lose the battle once we start allowing ourselves to wallow in self pity and think that we have to start all over again. We should build on past accomplishments to be able to let the world see and understand that the future remains bright for Davao City.

Our local government must show strength and be able to articulate clear-cut plans on ensuring the safety of its citizens and guests. The tourism sector must be able to create even more events, media blitzes and special tour packages so that people will keep coming. Local entrepreneurs must show that this was a minor disturbance, with no palpable impact on the local economy, by moving on with their plans for new businesses or expansions. Our partners in media must make sure that all efforts of the community are communicated to the world.

The Feb. 14 bombing must drive us to work harder so that we put Davao back on its feet as fast as possible. Let us stop talking about the negative impact of this event on our tourism and economy. Let us talk about positive actions that we plan to do to bring back confidence in Davao's peace and order.

Moreover, our ordeal is now a shared one, as everyone knows that other places were simultaneously affected. This is not something that happened to Davao, or even Mindanao, alone. Therefore, rehashed "negative images" focusing on specific places just won't cut it this time. To say that so-and-so city isn't safe because it has a bombing problem doesn't really apply under the circumstances. Can you make that same statement of, Makati, for instance?

This incident can, therefore, also be an opportunity for synergy between and among cities. The respective LGUs, business chambers and NGOs of the affected cities can join hands and create an expanded network of corporate synergy and joint security.

Obviously, whoever orchestrated these simultaneous incidents wanted to make a really big statement, unmindful of the lives that were lost in the process. Let's turn the tables around and show them that the fracas they created to raise their spirits had done nothing to dampen ours.

We all know that bombs are nothing for a citizenry that has the determination and the commitment to move forward!

(Joji Ilagan-Bian is a strong advocate for Mindanao; member of the Export Development Council and former chair of the Mindanao Business Council; vice chair of the Mindanao Commission of Women and National Corn Board, and chair of the Mindanao TVET. Email comments to jojibian2@yahoo.com)

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ICT companies to hire 46,000 workers this year, survey shows

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE QUALITY of education must be improved and school programs must be aligned with the needs of the information and communication technology sector as ICT-enabled service firms are expected to hire 46,000 new workers within the year, a survey among industry players and their clients showed.

Conducted by the IT Association of the Philippines in the last quarter of 2004, the survey covered 214 ICT and non-ICT companies, most of which reported at least P1 billion in revenue each.

ITAP president Dittas A. Formoso said the study found that the local demand for ICT workers would grow to over 200,000—translating to 46,000 new hires in 2005—with a majority being absorbed in ICT-enabled service businesses.

Formoso explained that for purposes of the survey, an ICT worker was defined as one involved in the following fields: database design; development and administration; digital media such as animators and artists; enterprise system analysis and integration such as process analysts and application integrators, and network design and administration.

The study also considered as ICT workers those who work on programming and software engineering; technical support; technical writing and training, IT sales and marketing; contact centers; data encoding, and transcription.

Also, Formoso said the study showed that the low industry acceptance rate for job applicants of 3.3 percent was "a cause of concern" as this might mean an oversupply of ICT graduates and/or the lack of quality education produced by the system.

"In general, it is believed that the Philippine ICT workforce is technically competent but lacking in soft and business skills," she said.

"In terms of future skills, effort should be found in the need for critical thinking, project management and technical skills such as networking, programming and database-related (abilities)," she added.

The major areas that need to be addressed

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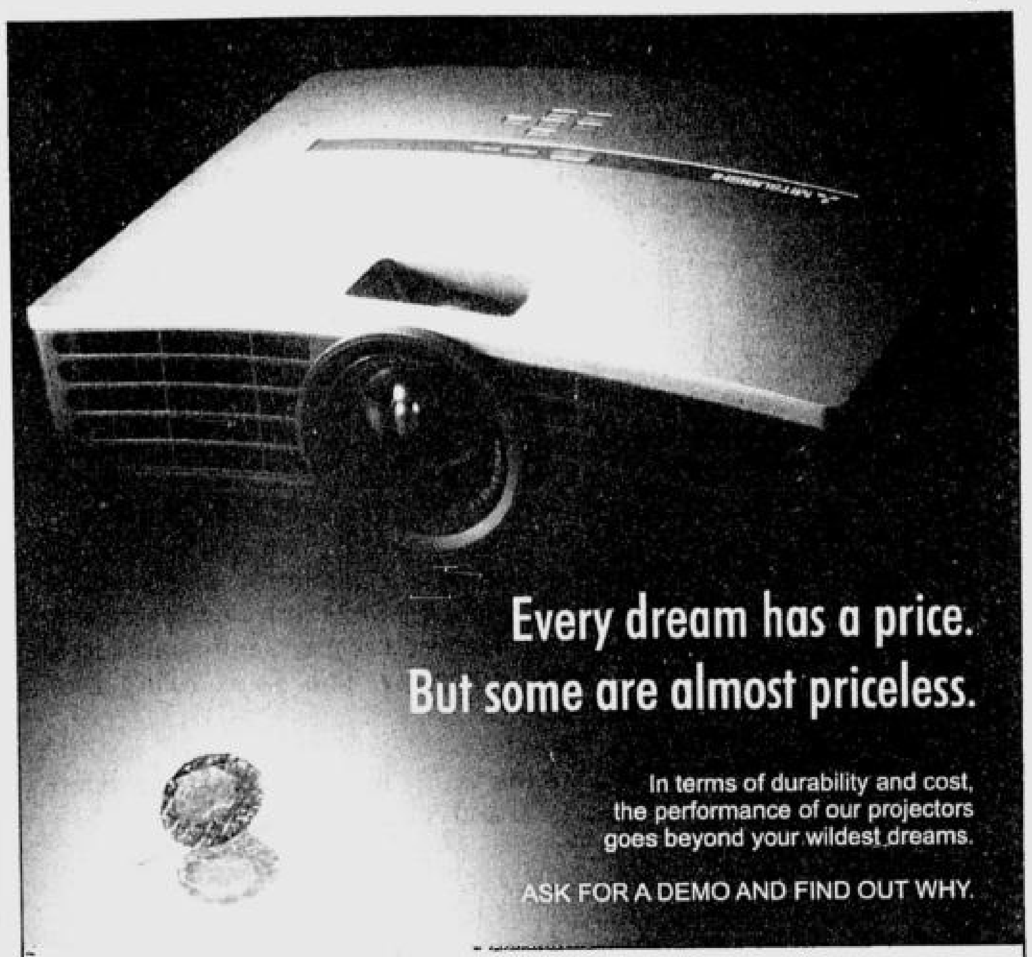

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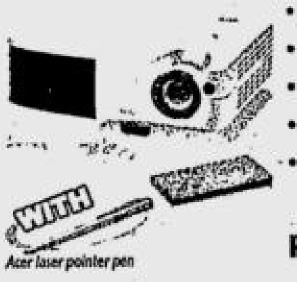

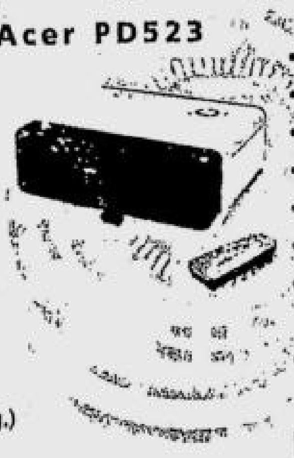

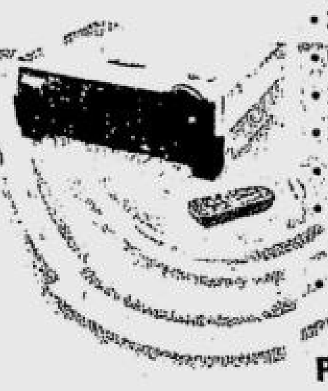

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Filipinos as 'poor' savers

No Free Lunch

Cielito F Habito

MONEY makes the world go round, or so a popular Broadway musical declares. In business, financing or the lack of it determines how much working capital and investment resources an enterprise can mobilize, which in turn can spell the success or failure of the business. At the economy-wide level, financing determines how vigorous or sluggish the productive sectors can be, thereby determining their capacity to generate jobs. In turn, the financial resources needed to fuel investments and overall development ultimately come from the savings that can be mobilized in the economy.

Low saving rate

Here is where the Philippines has a problem. Among its Southeast Asian neighbors, our country consistently had the lowest saving rate, measured as the ratio of gross domestic savings (GDS) to gross domestic product (GDP), the latter being a measure of national income. Based on data from the Asian Development Bank, our 18.8 percent saving rate in 2002 was lower than Singapore's 44.8, Malaysia's 41.9, Thailand's 31.1, and even Indonesia's 21.1 percent. Looking at these figures, one is tempted to believe that a country's level of development is broadly correlated with—and probably determined by—its ability to save. One might ask, could it be the other way around, i.e. the level of development determines the saving rate? That Indonesia has a lower per capita income and yet a higher saving rate than the Philippines leads me to think otherwise.

Saving is measured as what gets left after deducting all expenditures and debt payments from disposable income (that is, income after taxes). There are four general groups of savers in an economy: households and unincorporated enterprises, private corporations, government corporations and the government itself. As for the last item, persistently large budget deficits have made government a non-contributor to national savings. Even then, our private saving is still supposedly low relative to the region.

Why do Filipinos save so little in comparison to their Southeast Asian neighbors? The standard answer has tended to be, "because most Filipinos are too poor to save." An economist friend claims that Filipinos who do save (i.e. those with higher incomes) have savings rates even exceeding that of the Singaporeans. But for the majority of Filipino households who earn barely enough to support their needs, we could not expect any savings to come from their direction, he says, and thus overall saving rate is low.

Wealth in the poor

This is where other colleagues disagree. We may not see it readily, but the poor do save, say those who have actually studied and worked with the poor. And there remains great potential there for saving. They point to the billions of pesos that go through the ubiquitous *jueteng*, the supposedly illegal numbers game that is all over the place nonetheless, and which preys primarily on low income groups. That's gambling, of course, and not saving.

But researchers have documented how poor families especially in the rural areas tend to stock up on specific commodities—not durables like jewelry or appliances, but even just storable groceries—and then sell these off in times of need for cash. That is saving. Our day housekeeper in Los Baños keeps a pig tied up in her backyard, fattening it with whatever kitchen refuse she can collect from neighbors, and an occasional kilo or two of grain livestock feed she can afford to buy. She expects to cash in on it in June, in time for the kids' school expenses. And this is a fairly common practice especially in the rural areas. That is saving. And then there are the *paluwagan* schemes one seems to find in every squatter neighborhood, especially among the women. Again, that is saving.

Who says the poor don't save? They do, except that their savings never find their way into the formal financial system, nor the official statistics on saving. Chances are, our low saving rate as officially reported is substantially understated, given these various forms of saving actually undertaken by the poor, which put together would amount to substantial sums. What more if we can channel the daily amount many of them stake in *jueteng* into savings schemes instead?

Deepening the pool

Turning the economy's savings into investments by enterprises requires intermediaries or mechanisms to link the savers to the investors. In the Philippines, banks still account for about 82 percent of financial resources in the system. How much of savings actually go through the banks as deposits, which eventually become the source of loanable funds for investors? Incremental deposits, or the amount of new bank deposits generated in a given year, would give an indication of this. The ratio of incremental deposits to GDS tells us how much of savings are actually channeled through banks. This ratio peaked at 70 percent in 1997, but dropped to only 17 percent the following year after the Asian financial crisis scared people from keeping their money in the banks. In normal times, more than half of domestic savings probably go through the banks.

But banks need not be the only link. Elsewhere, loans as a source of enterprise finance have been declining in importance, as other financial market mechanisms (equity markets, mutual funds, pension funds, etc.) emerge as preferred saving instruments to low-interest yielding bank deposits. There are active efforts underway in the Philippines to clear the policy constraints that have put these other mechanisms at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the banks in linking savers to investors. Given the above, of special concern to us should be how to channel the substantial savings coming from the lower income groups into the financial pool.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

"Unexpected reversal of SEC ruling on acquisition of shares creates investment uncertainty"

On February 16, 2005, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) unexpectedly reversed its en banc ruling on the CEMCO acquisition of Union Cement Holdings Corporation (UCHC) shares from Bacnotan Consolidated Industries, Inc. (BCII) and Atlas Cement Corporation.

Prior to the transaction and upon approval by its board of directors, BCII disclosed with the SEC and the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) the proposed investment by CEMCO for the acquisition of UCHC shares.

On July 27, 2004 the SEC en banc ruled and confirmed with the PSE that the Tender Offer Rule is not applicable to the purchase as the transaction is not equity shares of a public company but shares in a majority stockholders of a listed company. The same ruling was disseminated to all stockbrokers.

In reliance and on the strength of the SEC ruling, CEMCO proceeded to acquire UCHC's shares from BCII and Atlas Cement.

The reversal of the ruling by SEC itself and making it retroactive is unexpected and highly unusual. The transaction and subsequent investment into the country was based on precedent and on the SEC ruling of July 27, 2004. This reversal creates further uncertainty for investors in the Philippines.

CEMCO is studying the decision in detail and examining what options are available.

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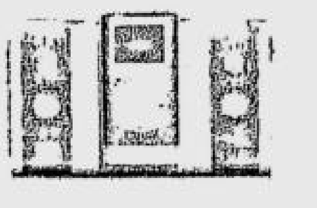

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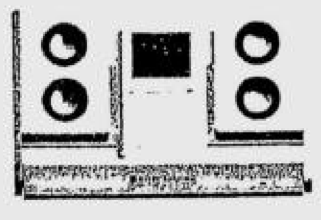

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Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	49.5	49.5	49	49	24,100
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	1	1.04	0.9	0.93	67,660,000
International Exch. Bank	19.5	20	19.25	19.25	519,700
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	40	40.5	39.5	39.5	2,881,100
Philippine National Bank	35.5	35.5	34	34	62,700
Philippine Trust Co.	39	39	39	39	900
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	15	15.25	15	15.25	3,000
Security Bank Corp.	33	33.5	33	33.5	378,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	31	31	30.5	30.5	13,300
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.04	1.04	60,000
First Abacus Financial	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	100,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	2,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	270	280	270	280	380
Manulife Financial Corp.	2510	2510	2510	2510	100
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2.12	2.12	2.12	2.12	101,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	140	140	140	140	500
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1785	1785	1785	1785	260
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	17.75	17.75	17.75	17.75	154,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.56	1.58	9,954,000
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	1	1	1	1	10,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	930	930	930	930	26,600
Ipeople Inc.	4.8	5	4.7	4.7	165,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	800,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.041	0.042	0.038	0.04	14,300,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.7	3.7	3.55	3.6	3,897,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	30,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1405	1410	1400	1405	38,520
Ivantage Corp.	0.76	0.86	0.76	0.82	68,320,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	9,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	17.5	17.5	17.25	17.25	234,800
Manila Electric Co. B	27.5	27.5	26	26.5	1,121,000
Petron Corp.	3.8	3.95	3.8	3.95	14,549,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.6	1.64	1.6	1.6	1,111,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.96	2	1.96	2	1,038,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.9	7.9	7.8	7.9	2,405,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.48	0.5	0.48	0.5	280,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	11,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.57	0.58	0.55	0.55	1,720,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.04	230,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.45	4.45	3.9	4.05	17,423,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	3,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.95	4.2	3.95	4	304,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	37.5	38	37.5	38	115,100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28.5	28.5	28	28.5	1,225,800
Pancake House Inc.	1.2	1.56	1.2	1.56	285,000
RFM Corp.	1.24	1.24	0.88	0.96	118,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.39	0.48	0.39	0.42	2,030,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	58	57.5	57.5	39,900
San Miguel Corp. B	80.5	81	80.5	81	89,400
Universal Robina Corp.	9.9	9.9	9.9	9.9	10,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.32	0.33	0.3	0.3	660,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.013	0.013	0.01	0.011	466,600,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.014	0.014	0.011	0.011	22,300,000
Ayala Corp.	8.6	8.7	8.3	8.4	7,752,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.72	0.73	0.69	0.69	1,070,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.8	5	4.65	4.65	1,291,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.5	11.5	11.25	11.25	6,300
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.036	0.038	0.034	0.036	62,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.28	2.28	2.2	2.2	398,000
APC Group Inc.	0.63	0.65	0.5	0.51	57,730,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	168,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	680,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.72	1.8	1.7	1.8	30,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	10,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	20,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	44,500
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.18	0.18	2,250,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.44	1.48	1.3	1.32	86,133,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	0.88	0.88	0.86	0.86	230,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.22	0.23	0.22	0.225	1,420,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.27	0.27	3,450,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.67	0.69	0.64	0.64	7,450,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.55	4.55	3.9	4.1	7,343,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0725	0.0725	0.0625	0.065	46,300,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.48	1.48	656,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	9	9.4	9	9.3	1,435,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	50	50	49.5	49.5	1,093,500
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.25	0.35	0.25	0.27	1,340,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.13	0.135	0.105	0.11	83,520,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.84	1.86	1,995,000
Ionics Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	1,043,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	530,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.24	2.26	2.22	2.22	305,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	500,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.018	0.02	0.018	0.02	2,900,000
Medco Holdings	0.42	0.5	0.42	0.42	640,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.7	9,191,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.155	0.155	280,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.35	0.45	0.35	0.37	1,450,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.68	0.71	0.63	0.63	242,390,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.3	18,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.46	0.48	0.38	0.41	25,570,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.24	1.32	1.24	1.32	86,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.45	0.47	0.4	0.4	3,070,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.06	442,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.59	0.67	0.59	0.63	3,520,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.5	0.56	0.5	0.5	370,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	10,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	2.95	3	2.95	3	40,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.165	0.165	0.16	0.16	1,000,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.24	0.26	0.225	0.235	5,160,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.4	0.41	0.38	0.38	4,910,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	1	1.1	1	1.1	390,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.59	0.59	0.5	0.5	110,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	1,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	100,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.93	0.96	0.93	0.96	110,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.11	0.145	0.11	0.11	24,800,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	10,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.82	1.86	1.52	1.66	45,950,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.38	1.44	1.28	1.28	11,552,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.95	0.98	0.9	0.92	8,480,000
Manila Jockey Club	5	5.3	4.9	4.9	65,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.4	0.42	0.39	0.39	4,350,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	1,000,000
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	460	460	460	460	160
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.4	9.5	9.4	9.4	9,583,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	30,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.92	0.93	650,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.39	0.4	0.36	0.36	11,340,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.36	0.39	0.29	0.32	134,560,000
Elb Realty Developers Inc.	0.38	0.39	0.34	0.34	1,890,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.53	0.54	28,260,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.3	1.32	1.3	1.3	47,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.72	1.72	6,547,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.21	0.21	500,000
Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	100,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	1,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.28	5,990,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	290,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.22	0.22	7,000,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.215	0.23	0.2	0.225	3,920,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.85	2.95	2.85	2.95	70,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.31	0.32	0.3	0.3	5,550,000
SM Development Corp.	1.9	2	1.86	2	1,044,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.3	8.5	8.3	8.5	8,682,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.3	275,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.32	1.4	1.32	1.4	170,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	186,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	7.4	7.6	7.3	7.3	776,000
Benguet Corp. A	9	9	9	9	19,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	16,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.41	33,860,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.44	0.45	0.43	0.44	71,860,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.022	0.022	0.021	0.021	166,800,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.03	0.03	0.029	0.029	576,800,000
Omico Corp.	0.0085	0.009	0.008	0.0085	2,533,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.14	1.26	1.12	1.22	7,625,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.38	1.54	1.38	1.48	33,106,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	45.5	45.5	44	44.5	740,300
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.33	0.34	0.29	0.34	480,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	15,200,000
Interport Res.	0.007	0.007	0.006	0.006	75,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.007	0.0075	0.007	0.0075	74,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	186,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	2,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	550,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.45	120,000
Pacifica	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	11,900,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6	55,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.25	0.26	0.195	0.2	154,640,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	50,000

CURRENCIES

February 20, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.764994	1.000000	54.9770
Japan	Yen	0.007251	0.009478	0.5211
United Kingdom	Pound	1.449740	1.895100	104.1869
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098081	0.128212	7.0487
Switzerland	Franc	0.646274	0.844809	46.4451
Canada	Dollar	0.622351	0.813537	44.7258
Singapore	Dollar	0.466659	0.610016	33.5368
Australia	Dollar	0.603450	0.788830	43.3675
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.029269	2.652661	145.8353
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.203993	0.266660	14.6602
Brunei	Dollar	0.465240	0.608162	33.4349
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000108	0.0059
Thailand	Baht	0.019852	0.025950	1.4267
UAE	Dirham	0.208286	0.272272	14.9687
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.307200	71.8659
Argentina	Peso	0.263654	0.344649	18.9478
Brazil	Real	0.298592	0.390320	21.4586
Denmark	Kroner	0.134332	0.175599	9.6539
India	Rupee	0.017510	0.022889	1.2584
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.201341	0.263193	14.4696
Mexico	New Peso	0.069074	0.090293	4.9640
South Africa	Rand	0.129441	0.169205	9.3024
Korea	Won	0.000747	0.000976	0.0537
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024251	0.031701	1.7428

Ayala's Valentine delights

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

IN A series of pre-Valentine transactions, parent company Ayala Corp. has unloaded over 36.2 million shares of Ayala Land worth nearly P336 million.

Ayala Corp. sold the realty shares from P9.20 to P9.80 each, better than what brothers Jaime Augusto and Fernando Zobel obtained when they unloaded their respective stock options before Christmas at P7.10 to P7.30/share range.

But, then again, the Zobel brothers also control and manage Ayala Corp.

Despite the sales, Ayala Corp. still owns about 62.13 percent of Ayala Land, still a tad higher from the end-2004 level of 61.88 percent.

Ayala Land closed Friday at P9.40.

ABS-CBN disengagement

MARIA Rosario Santos-Concio, the executive vice president of ABS-CBN, has just returned from a one-and-a-half month vacation "glowing like a Baron Travel Girl," quashing rumors that the former beauty queen-actress was finally calling it quits after nearly 18 years with the country's largest broadcast network.

Ironically, Concio, who is turning 51 this year, immediately unloaded her entire ABS-CBN shareholdings, all 173,212 shares of them, upon reporting for work.

Asked why she was divesting herself of the company stock, Concio, through a spokeswoman, said she was now actively engaged in stock market trading.

Bell-bottom blues

THE CASH-RICH National Transmission Corp. is on the market for a brand-new, twin-engine helicopter, setting aside P336 million for that purpose.

But even before the March 7 bidding, one of the bidders, Asian Aerospace, the distributor of Bell helicopters, has already written Malacañang, seeking presidential intercession.

According to the grapevine, Asian Aerospace claims it would be cheaper for the government to simply lease two helicopters for 15 years, maintenance free, for P200 million, which Bell of course is offering.

Money-go-round

- DAVAO Apo View Hotel has received a P300-million joint venture proposal from a Japanese-American group, which plans to convert one wing of the 158-room hotel into a retirement home for the Japanese market.

The buy-in, however, is conditioned on Apo View finally settling amicably with Banco Filipino over the hotel's P211-million soured loan.

- W BROWN, the shoe and apparel line started by mining executive/developer Walter Brown, has been acquired by Pro Star Marketing, the distributor of Dr. Martens and Nike shoes, from Global Brands.

Global Brands, a local subsidiary of a venture firm controlled by Prudential of United Kingdom, bought the shoe-and-apparel line, along with Vulcaseal and Rugby adhesives, from Brown four years ago.

Heard through the grapevine

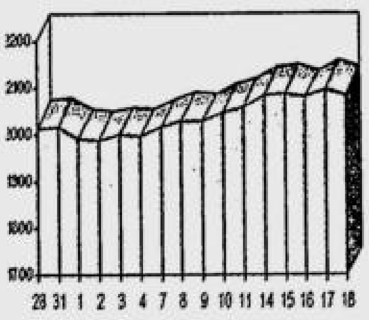
THE MISSING Lamborghini Murcielago, BMW 645 Ci and BMW X3 have been returned to their real owner, PriceSmart chair William Go, after the latter coughed up a few millions in "mortgage" payments to retrieve them from the nebulous secondary market.

With the hot cars having been returned, the estafa charges against former AIM president Felipe Alfonso, whose checks had been fraudulently used to acquire the three luxury vehicles, may now be settled out-of-court, provided Alfonso reimburse the expenses.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Market expected to consolidate

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez



ANALYSTS expect the market to shed off some points and the investors to continue selling some of their stocks this week.

But this will not be because of any negative sentiment, the analysts interviewed said.

Analysts said the market is in a consolidation phase where decent profits can be made after several weeks of buying.

Last week, the market still managed to post a gain of 24.45 points or 1.19 percent up to 2,085.93, despite a disappointing two-notch downgrade by Moody's Investors Service of the country's sovereign rating.

The gainers last week, according to BPI Trade, included Belle Corp., Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Benpres Holdings Corp., Petron Corp., SM Prime Holdings, First Philippine Holdings, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., Philippine National Bank, San Miguel Corp. B shares, International Container Terminal Services Inc., JG Summit Holdings, Equitable PCI Bank, and ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.

Those that weighed on the market were Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., DMCI Holdings, Ayala Land, Manila Electric Co., Filinvest Land Inc., Ayala Corp., Holcim Phils., Megaworld Corp., Digital Telecommunications Phils., and Lepanto Mining B shares.

With the series of negative developments, such as the bombing incidents and Moody's downgrade, investors have adopted a more cautious stance. They opted to sell their holdings, or portion of their portfolio, ahead of the weekend.

"If there are no negative developments over the weekend, that may help stabilize market sentiment," BPI Trade said in its weekly report.

The market is still generally overbought and investors want to see it consolidate its gains before moving up again.

"However, we still expect some bargain hunting as prices correct. Investors are likely to take advantage of lower prices to enter the market," it added.

Analysts still see a bullish market despite the blow dealt by Moody's Investors Service when it slashed the government's sovereign rating by two notches, wider than what most industry analysts expected yesterday.

"We were up 40 points within the day before the Moody's announcement. We fell 50 points from the peak," Jojo Gonzales, head of research at Philippine Equity Partners Inc., said.

Gonzales said that one good thing brought about by the negative developments was that it sent a very strong signal to legislators that a lot of work had to be done, including the passage of needed tax reforms.

The downgrade, he said, would not negatively affect most Philippine companies, which were also rated by Moody's, since most of blue-chip companies showed strong cash flows. Moody's has yet to release its ratings on Philippine companies which analysts expect to be aligned with its recent sovereign ratings downgrade.

Alfred Dy, head of research at CLSA Phils., said that aside from jolting the government to pass crucial tax reforms, the two-notch downgrade was also a wake-up call for it to act on other revenue raising measures such as the privatization of power generation assets of the National Power Corp. and the sale of government's 41 percent stake in food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp.

PSE president Francis Lim, for his part, said he was optimistic that the downgrade "will not have a long-term adverse effect on the stock market."

"Investors will see through the good fundamentals underlying the macro-economic picture of our country, the better-than expected GDP performance, record-high performance of overseas remittances, concrete measures being adopted by government to contain the deficit, confidence of the local investors in our stock market, stronger peso and the good news from the corporate sector will sustain the bullish performance of our stock market," Lim said.

He added that with higher interest rates on debts that might follow the credit ratings downgrade, companies might be encouraged to raise funds from initial public offerings at the stock market, instead of borrowing from banks.

"This is a much cheaper alternative to raise capital," he said.

Jose Vistan, head of research at AB Capital Securities Inc., meanwhile said the downgrade was not really a big surprise since investors used it as an excuse to sell their shares after the stock market's recent bull run.

"The big picture is still bullish. This is just a correction within a bull market," he said.

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1.0MM - 4,999,999	6.000	6.250	6.375	6.500
5.0MM - 9,999,999	6.250	6.500	6.625	6.750
10 million and up	6.500	6.750	7.000	7.250

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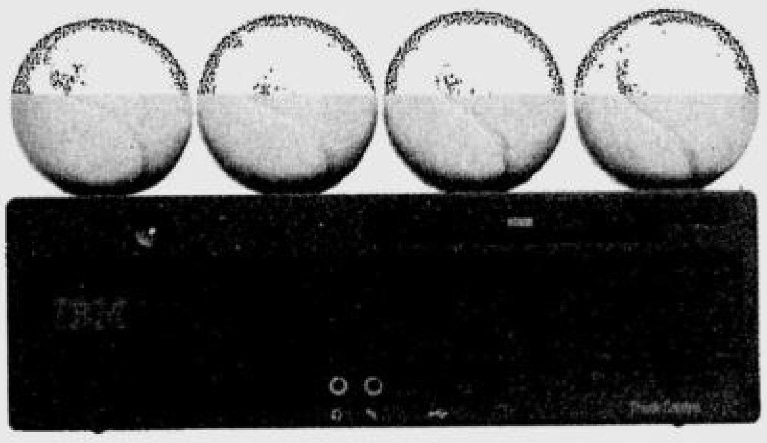

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Petron's Tulong Aral goes beyond basic education

By Abigail L. Ho

AS THE country's budget deficit balloons, the budget for education wanes. While education seems to remain one of the government's top priorities, the reality is that more and more children are not going to school.

In Metro Manila alone, some 516,000 children are deprived of education. And even those that are actually given the opportunity to go to school are either not getting good enough education or are forced to eventually drop out due to poverty.

If children are indeed the country's hope for the future, then the country's future may be in serious danger.

This was exactly what prompted Petron Corp., through Petron Foundation, to take on a task that could, in one way or another, help make the country's future a little less bleak.

"There was an urgent need to improve the quality of education, particularly at the primary level because that's the very basic foundation of education," said Petron Foundation executive director Marilou Erni.

So then Petron Foundation started looking for students to help—six-year-olds who belong to urban poor communities as identified by the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

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STUDENTS from Zamora Elementary School in Pandacan, Manila, browse through books available at the Petron booth during the recently concluded CSR Expo held in celebration of the 5th Corporate Social Responsibility Week.

Through the Tulong Aral ng Petron program, launched in 2002 in cooperation with the DSWD, 1,000 scholars from 12 municipalities in Metro Manila were chosen. These scholars would then get the necessary assistance to finish their elementary education.

Since public elementary education is almost free of charge, the Tulong Aral program will provide its scholars with other forms of assistance, including school supplies, uniforms, shoes, school bags and meal allowances.

CORPORATE CITIZEN

Tulong Aral scholars and their parents will also be allowed to participate in various support programs like tutorials, story-telling sessions and remedial classes for the children and parenting workshops and livelihood programs for their parents.

All scholars are also gathered every Christmas for a get-together sponsored by the Petron Foundation.

"The program really goes beyond just basic education. This is a long-term deliberate effort," Erni said.

Go and multiply

Here is how the program works: the first 1,000 scholars, if they actually finish the first grade without dropping out, will be scholars for another five years. This means that, as the program progresses, the number of scholars under Tulong Aral will grow at a pace of 1,000 a year.

Assuming that there will be no dropouts at all for each batch of scholars, Tulong Aral will have 1,000 beneficiaries on its first year, 2,000 on its second year and 3,000 on its third year and so on. This is because the first 1,000 scholars will have already moved on to the second grade, at the same time that a new batch of first-grade scholars are welcomed into the fold.

During school year 2002-2003, out of the 1,000 six-year-olds chosen to participate in the program, 930 actually finished the first grade, with 20 ranking first in their respective classes.

The following school year, 2003-2004, no new batch of scholars came in, but 979 out of 997 scholars were able to finish the second grade.

For school year, 2004-2005, when a new batch of scholars was again taken in, the total number of Tulong Aral scholars had gone up to 2,033.

Group effort

The program gets help not only from Petron as a company but also from Petron's employees, in their personal capacity.

Erni said it took only about P4,700 to put a child through a year of elementary schooling. Seeing that this was something they could actually afford, Petron employees immediately jumped onto the Tulong Aral bandwagon by adopting one or two scholars or donating a month's salary.

Some employees even found more creative ways to help, she said, like donating prizes that they won from their departments' summer outings, donating the proceeds from bazaars that they set up, and dropping some of their earnings into the Tulong Aral coin banks.

While already helping so many students through the Tulong Aral program and the Petron family, Erni said there was still a huge number of poverty-stricken kids who deserved to be given a chance at education.

This then sparked the idea of getting other companies to start their own primary education assistance programs, with the option to use the Tulong Aral model as their basis.

To help make things even easier for companies wanting to engage in a similar corporate social responsibility project, Petron Foundation consolidated in a book some education- and poverty-related data as well as its own experiences in running an elementary education assistance program.

It was a timely effort on the part of Petron as, Erni said, the League of Corporate Foundations to which Petron Foundation belonged and which Erni is heading, was trying to focus its attention on education-related projects.

"We at the League of Corporate Foundations agreed to revisit our priorities and focus on primary education and youth development programs," she said.

Other companies, she said, could choose to either set up their own elementary education assistance programs or take in as high school or college scholars the graduates of the Tulong Aral program.

Still others could opt to get the scholars employed eventually, she said.

"The (Tulong Aral) program is actually not a program that is specific to Petron. We want to be a catalyst. Other companies can use our system," she said.

Stopping poverty cycle

According to the 2001-2004 Medium Term Philippine Development Plan, four components comprise comprehensive human development, which will ultimately result in poverty reduction. These four components include investments in education and training, enhanced health care, expanded access to shelter and protection of vulnerable groups.

Petron decided to focus on the education aspect of poverty alleviation through the Tulong Aral program.

"Tulong Aral is long term in nature as it is very well connected with global and national programs and agenda. This is the best contribution a company can have: a program that starts with elementary education," Erni said.

Because the future lies with the children, what better way to help ensure a brighter future for the country than to equip these children early on with the proper tools to face what lies ahead.

ICT companies to hire 46,000 workers this year, survey shows

From page B3

revolve around improving the quality of education and having a strong organization that would help in developing the industry, Formoso said.

In a forum of corporate chief executives at the e-Services Philippines 2005 conference held last Thursday, it was suggested that schools and colleges put up programs specifically meant to produce ICT workers that have the desired skills.

During the conference, experts said the local ICT sector was expected to keep its dramatic uptrend in growth especially in the call center sector.

Government data show that investments in ICT ventures went up 49.4 percent to P8.07 billion in 2004 against P5.4 billion in 2003.

At the same time, analysts projected that the revenues from local call center operations would reach $3.6 billion within five years, enabling the country to overtake India's global lead in the sector.

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Tagaytay Midlands	800,000	650,000
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Orchard Golf Club "A"		Pls call
Quezon City Sports Club	150K	
Riviera Golf Club "A"		70K
Riviera Golf Club "B"		140K
Riviera Sports & C.C.	50K	
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3. Rene J. Buenaventura, CEO - Equitable PCIB
4. Ramon Isberto, Head Public Affairs - Smart
5. Juan Miguel del Rosario, VP HR - Unit. Pulp and Paper Co. Inc.
6. Franz Pumaren, Basketball Coach - DLSU

Evening Session
(Start: 5:30 pm - End: 8:00 pm)
1. Dr. Carmelita I. Quebengco, EVP - DLSU
2. Franco del Rosario, GSigma Consulting
3. James Matti, CEO Ayala AON
4. Gerard Sanvictores, SGV Partner
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Judging the judges

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

JUSTICE Artemio Panganiban talked about the Supreme Court's reform program of the judicial system at the monthly forum of Kilosbayan held at the Lyceum last Feb. 11. The occasion was also the fifth anniversary of Bantay Katarungan.

Although I come from a family of lawyers (my late father started practicing law in Naga City in 1924 when there were only about a dozen lawyers in all of Camarines Sur), I usually do not listen to speeches by lawyers, even Justices of the Supreme Court. I just cannot stand legalese.

But I was there because Jun Dakanay, the incoming national president of the Philippine Association of Retired Persons (PARP), had been badgering me to attend the monthly forum of Kilosbayan. Besides, I wanted to listen to Justice Panganiban. The decision he wrote on the mining law last December was remarkably readable, particularly the part on the mathematical side of the case.

I have heard it said that the less a lawyer knows about math, the better are his chances of landing in the Supreme Court. So, any Justice who knows his sums, as Panganiban does, has my deepest respect.

I thoroughly enjoyed Panganiban's talk. He certainly kept me awake. Nowadays, it is easy to send me snoring with a boring speech. Also, I always like a guy who does not take himself too seriously, even if he were a Justice.

Later, Dakanay sent me a printed copy of the speech. Let me comment on a couple of points discussed by Panganiban.

He says, "It is not enough that judges be walking databases of the Constitution, the law and jurisprudence; they must also have a working knowledge of the arts, history, health, medicine, philosophy, mathematics, physics, psychology, economics, computers, and the latest biosciences and biotechnologies."

I suggest that they should also have a working knowledge of insurance. Judging from a recent decision on the documentary stamp tax on policies, the court just could not plumb the mysteries of insurance.

Panganiban told us this story: "When I was still practicing law a decade ago, a wealthy businessman visited me. He told me, 'I know that your law office is composed of competent bar topnotchers, who are experienced in the labyrinths of the law. But my question is, do you also know the judge in whose sala my case is pending? It is good to know the law, but it is better to know the judge.' Upon hearing those remarks, my partners and I respectfully declined the case, even if it meant losing a sizeable retainer."

This brought back the favorite story of my late brother Luising, who practiced law in Naga City for almost 50 years.

One day, Luising called on the abbess of the local Carmelites, who had earlier phoned to say that the nuns had a legal problem. The abbess, who was a childhood friend, said that during the rainy season, the creek running through their property overflowed because their neighbou next door had filled up the creek downstream and built a house against the nuns' objections.

The nuns had decided to sue. Cloistered they might be, they knew what was going on downtown. The abbess said, "We have come to know that one of the judges is a cousin of our neighbor. So, we don't want the case to land in his sala. We prefer that Judge Cruz (not the real name), who is a devout Catholic, hear the case. What should we do?"

Luising said, "Pray." Following this advice, the Carmelites of Naga and Sorsogon stormed the heavens with their prayers.

At the raffle to choose the judge, Luising told the clerk of court, "Let the first draw be just a warm-up. It will not count." The clerk drew Judge Cruz. Then Luising said, "The second draw is the one that counts." The clerk drew Judge Cruz again. Then Luising said, "Just for fun, please draw for the third and last time." The clerk, for the third and last time, drew Judge Cruz.

Of course, the Carmelites won the case, hands down. The neighbor had to tear down his house and dig up the creek.

There is more to our judicial system than meets the eye.

BOC sees P390M in profit

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANK of Commerce, the banking arm of Antonio Cojuangco, aims to post P390 million in net income after tax and loan provisioning this year, a sharp improvement from P77 million last year.

In a recent press briefing, BOC president Raul de Mesa said the bank had generated a net income after tax but before provisions of P668 million in 2004 compared to P825.67 million a year ago.

De Mesa, however, noted that the bank put up loan provisions of about P590 million, thus slashing the post-provisioning net earnings.

He said BOC's net interest income last year rose to P1.7 billion from P1.2 billion a year ago. Interest income from peso loans increased by P568 million on account of higher business volumes, improved interest margins and higher collections from past due loans.

The bank also invested over P200 million and hundreds of hours implementing its new core banking systems, which includes the full automation of the deposit system of its 112 branches nationwide.

BOC is also set to dispose of at least P1.6 billion in bad assets through the Special Purpose Vehicle framework by next month and raise P1.2 billion from a tier 2-capital issuance shortly after. De Mesa said the bank had secured the approval of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to sell its non-performing assets (NPA) before the current SPV Law expires in April. The bank has already incorporated its own SPV for this purposes.

He added the bank would conduct a second tranche of NPA disposal if Congress agrees to extend the effectivity of the SPV Law.

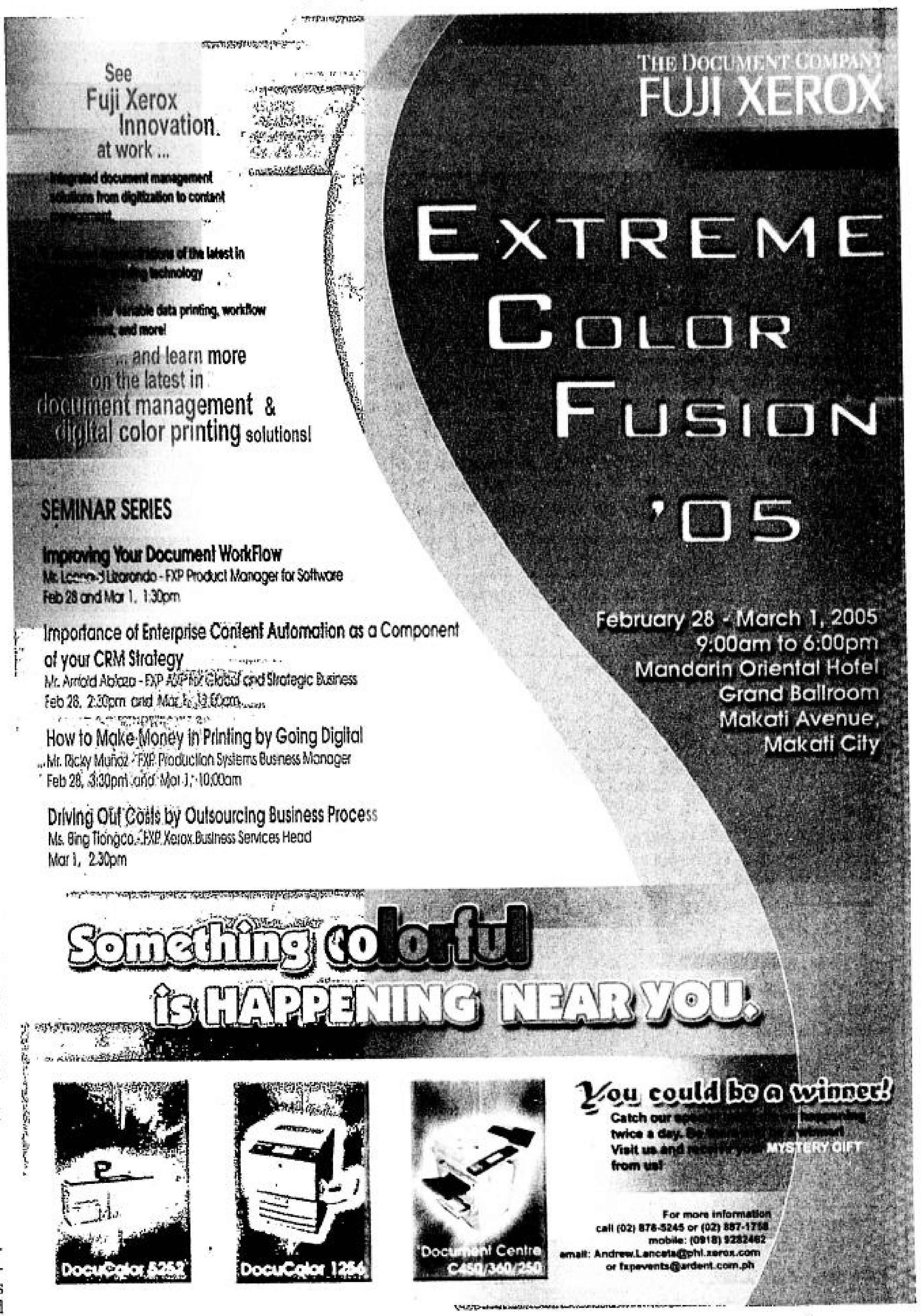
For the first tranche, De Mesa said three parties had so far expressed interest to join the bidding for the idle assets, composed of non-performing loans (NPL). The bidders are expected to submit their proposal by the end of this month so that a deal could be closed by March.

"After this transaction, our NPL ratio would be down to a single-digit level, to about 5 percent," De Mesa said.

The SPV Law intends to help banks get rid of their NPAs by waiving some of the taxes and reducing fees usually collected in the sale or transfer of assets. The law waived the documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and e-VAT (expanded value-added tax) and likewise reduced the registration/transfer fees by 50 percent.

However, the tax reliefs and other benefits are available only up to April 8 this year, unless Congress agrees to a two-year extension sought by the Bankers Association of the Philippines.

After the SPV deal, De Mesa said the bank would float by April some P1.2 billion in unsecured, subordinated tier-2 capital.



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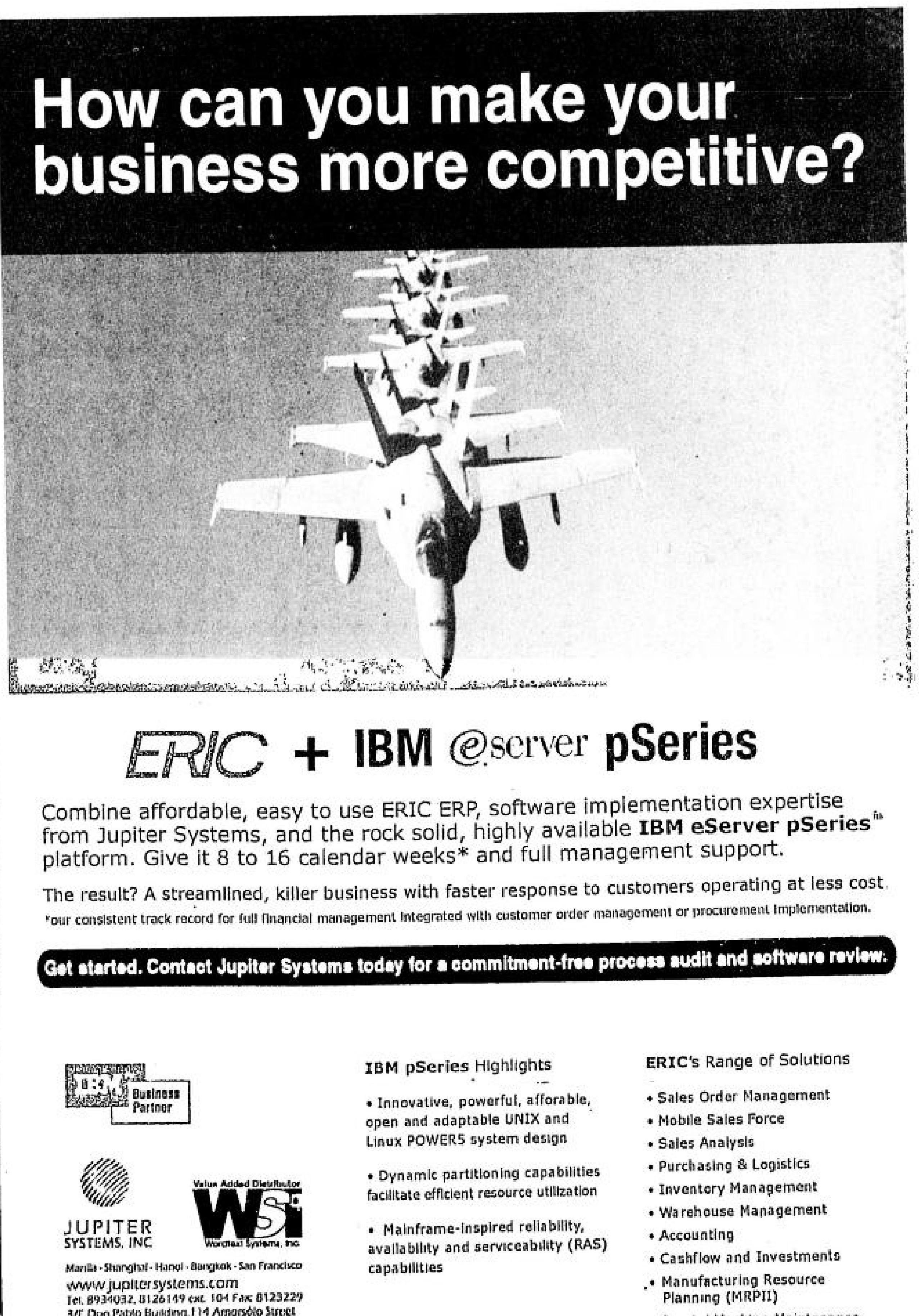

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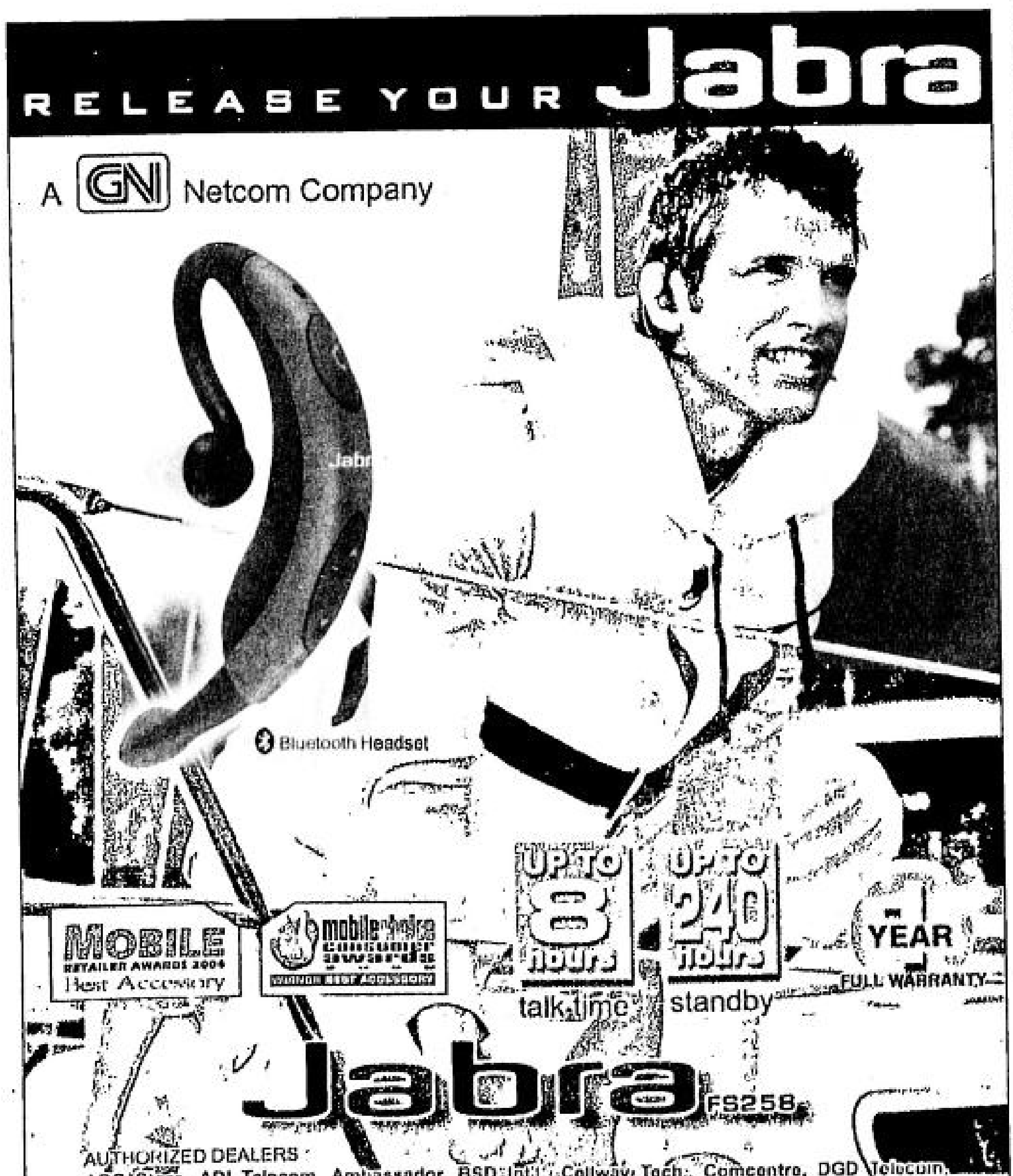

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: CIRCULAR NO. 471 (RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING OPERATIONS OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE DEALERS, MONEY CHANGERS AND REMITTANCE AGENTS)

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), in Circular No. 471 issued on 24 January 2005, requires all entities and persons engaged or desiring to engage in the business of buying and selling foreign currencies and in the remittance, transfer or transmittal of money on behalf of any person or entity, to register with the BSP.

Who should register and when

1. Existing foreign exchange dealers (FXDs), money changers (MCs) and remittance agents (RAs) operating as of 17 February 2005 **should apply within 90 days** from said date. Their branch offices, however, need not apply.
2. New applicants should register before starting operation as FXD, MC or RA

Following is the schedule of registration by area of operation of the applicant:

Applicant's Area of Operation	Start of Registration
Manila Pasay	February 18, 2005
Quezon City Kalookan Makati	February 28, 2005
Other areas in Metro Manila	March 7, 2005
Provincial areas	February 18, 2005

Sanctions

An existing FXD, MC or RA found operating without BSP application for registration after 17 May 2005 shall be subject to applicable penalties under Section 36 of RA No. 7653 (*The New Central Bank Act*), i.e., *fine of not less than P50,000.00 nor more than P200,000.00 or by imprisonment of not less than two years nor more than 10 years, or both*, at the discretion of the court.

Requirements for registration

1. Letter of application
2. Incorporation papers as a foreign exchange dealer/money changer and/or remittance agent authenticated by the Securities and Exchange Commission (for a corporation or a partnership), or Copy of the Certificate of Registration authenticated by the Dept. of Trade and Industry (for a single proprietorship), together with original document
3. Copy of business license/permit from the city or municipality where the business is located and operates
4. List of stockholders/partners/proprietor/directors/principal officers, as the case may be; and
5. Notarized Deed of Undertaking to strictly comply with the requirements of all relevant laws, rules and regulations, signed either by the owner, partner, president or officer of equivalent rank
6. NBI clearance

Where to obtain the pertinent BSP forms

The *Letter of Application* and *Deed of Undertaking* forms are available at the Supervision and Examination Dept. III (SED III) at the BSP Main Office, Malate, Manila, and in all BSP regional offices and branches all over the country. Both forms can also be downloaded from the BSP website *www@bsp.gov.ph.*

Processing fee

Each new and existing FXD, MC or RA shall be charged a processing fee of P1,000.00. Payment shall be made at the BSP Cash Dept., BSP Main Office, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday to Friday (except holidays), upon presentation of an Order of Payment issued by the SED III.

Where and when to register

Applications for registration may be filed Monday to Friday (except holidays) from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in any of the following BSP offices:

BSP Office	Address	Telephone No.
Supervision and Examination Dept. III, BSP Main Office	Multi-storey Bldg. Lobby (enter Gate 3) BSP Complex Mabini St., Malate, Manila	523-24-55; 536-60-71
Cebu Regional Office	Cor. Osmeña Blvd. & P. del Rosarios Sts. Cebu City	(032) 254-09-73; 254-14-50
La Union Regional Office	Quezon Ave., San Fernando, La Union	(072) 888-2083; 888-27-36
Davao Regional Office	Quirino Ave., Davao City	(082) 227-90-51; 227-19-03
Angeles Branch	Sto. Entierro St., Angeles City	(045) 888-58-58; 888-47-47
Batac Branch	National Highway, Quiling Norte Batac, Ilocos Norte	(077) 792-21-01; 792-21-03
Bacolod Branch	Lacson cor. Luzuriaga Sts. Bacolod City	(034) 433-31-78; 435;46-23
Cabanatuan Branch	Cor. Del Pilar & Paco Roman Sts. Cabanatuan City	(044) 463-17-36; 463-17-34
Cagayan de Oro Branch	National Highway cor. Velez St. Cagayan de Oro	(088) 856-44-26; 857-41-72
Cotabato Branch	Quezon Ave. cor. Sinsuat Ave. Cotabato City	(064) 421-73-70; 421-31-17
Dagupan Branch	Tondaligan, Bonoan Guesset , Dagupan City	(075) 614-30-26; 614-30-27
Dumaguete Branch	July Dev. Corp. Bldg., V. Lacson & Cervantes Sts., Dumaguete City	(035) 225-44-26; 225-34-64
General Santos Branch	Pendatun cor. Daprosa St., Gen. Santos City	(083) 552-23-11
Iloilo Branch	BSP Bldg., Solis St., Iloilo City	(033) 335-11-80; 337-66-35
Kalibo Branch	RSL Bldg., Arch. Reyes & G. Pastrana Sts. Kalibo, Aklan	(036) 262-55-78; 262-70-30
Legazpi Branch	Del Rosario Bldg. II, Rizal Ave., Legazpi City	(052) 480-57-35; 480-55-14
Lucena Branch	Quezon Ave., Lucena City	(042) 373-73-23; 710-31-75
Naga Branch	Chua Oco Bldg., Elias Angela St., Naga City	(054) 811-10-59; 811-24-72
Ozamiz Branch	Circumferential Road, Ozamiz City	(088) 521-02-63
Tacloban Branch	Uytingco Bldg., Sen. Enaje St., Tacloban City	(053) 325-51-34; 321-33-18
Tuguegarao Branch	Cor. Mabini & Gonzaga Sts., Tuguegarao Cagayan	(078) 844-10-75; 844-20-43
Zamboanga Branch	LHB Bldg. I, Veteranos Ave., Zamboanga City	(062) 991-21-51

Training/Seminar requirement

Prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Registration, the officers and the personnel directly involved in foreign exchange operations are required to attend a seminar on the requirements of the *Anti-Money Laundering Law*. The Anti-Money Laundering Council will start offering seminars starting April 5, 2005.

Contact persons and telephone numbers

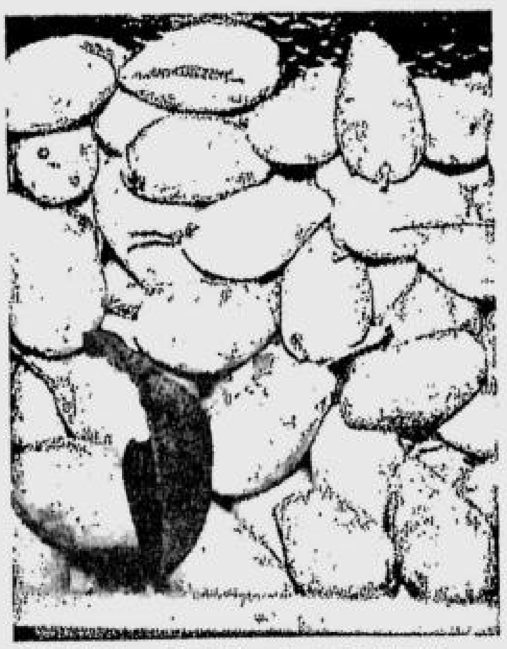
For other details, interested parties may contact the following:

SED III
Contact persons:
Mr. Nicanor F. Rillera
Tel: 524-70-11 to 51(trunk line), local 2888
525-61-45 (direct line)
Fax: 523-24-55
Atty. Conrado A. Reyno
Tel: 524-70-11 to 51 (TL), local 2512
536-60-71 (DL)
Fax: 523-99-66; e-mail: *creyno@bsp.gov.ph*

AMLC (regarding the seminar)
Contact person: **Ms. Rowena D. Rubio**
Tel: 521-56-62; 302-39-79
Fax: 524-60-85
e-mail: *rubio@bsp.gov.ph*
rd_rubio@yahoo.com

Mango exports seen to decline by 20%

By Christine A. Gaylican



SUPPLY from RP falling short of demand.

THE COUNTRY'S fresh mango exports this year are expected to drop by 20 percent to about 50,000 metric tons due to lower production and stricter protocols in importing countries, exporters said.

Production of mangoes dropped due to the three consecutive typhoons that hit several parts of the country in the last quarter of 2004.

Earnings from exporting fresh mangoes to Japan and other countries may decline by $10-$17 million to $40 million as available supply falls short of the markets' requirements, Philippine Mango Exporters Confederation Inc. president Roberto Amores said in an interview Friday.

"We do not expect the same volumes that we delivered in 2004. The typhoons damaged the crops that should have been harvested as early as January to begin exports by February," noted Amores.

He added that the mango processors, due to the lack of supply, may not be able,to meet their commitments to domestic and foreign buyers.

He said importing countries, including Japan, had started imposing stricter requirements and this might also limit the country's exports this year. Japan has been importing about 7,000 tons of fresh mangoes from the Philippines a year.

"Japanese authorities have recently altered the maximum residue limit to 0.05 ppm (parts per million) from .5 ppm. This is something that local producers and exporters were not prepared for," he said.

Amores said the industry had appealed to the Japanese government for some relaxation of inspection procedures. Mango exporters are also seeking the assistance of the Department of Agriculture in ensuring that mango producers do not use harmful pesticides in their plantations.

"This is to prepare the industry for the long term. We are afraid the EU (European Union) may be the next to implement stricter requirements," he said.

The Philippines is currently the eighth largest fresh mango exporter in the world. It is exporting fresh mangoes to Japan, Hong Kong, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Switzerland and Belgium.

The country's major fresh mango exporters include Amores' Hi-LAs Marketing Corp., Marsman Drysdale, Dole Asia Ltd. and Diamond Star Agro Products Inc.

Robina Farms embarking on expansion program

ROBINA Farms, the agribusiness subsidiary of JG Summit Holdings Corp., will expand its hog raising operations by putting up farms in the Visayas and Mindanao this year in a bid to increase its share.

At present, Robina Farms' operations are concentrated in Luzon.

"We are moving to the Visayas and Mindanao because we would like to take advantage of the FMD (foot and mouth disease)-free status of these areas," Robina Farms general manager Dr. Dante Palabrica told the INQUIRER in an interview.

The company is currently the third biggest commercial hog raiser in Luzon, after San Miguel Corp.'s Monterey Farms and the Lucio Tan Group's Foremost Farms.

For its Luzon operations, Palabrica said the company would increase the population of its swine herd by another 10,000 to 14,000 sows. Robina Farms' swine breeder farms are in Teresa, Rizal and San Miguel, Bulacan. These farms have a combined capacity to produce not less than to 200,000 heads a year.

Aside from hog farming, Robina Farms is also engaged in poultry farming. It supplies broilers and layer day-old chicks largely to backyard raisers (the company holds about 40-percent of the commercial day-old broiler chicks market and some 55-percent share in layer day-old pullets.)

Robina Farms is part of the Gokongwei Group's triumvirate of agro-industrial subsidiaries under Universal Robina Corp. , which accounted for about 13 percent of the entire group's P28.6-billion domestic sales in 2003.

The two other agro-industrial companies are Universal Corn Products Inc., engaged in the manufacture and distribution of animal feeds and glucose, and Robichem, which handles the production and distribution of animal health products. *Christine A. Gaylican*

BUYERS take a look at the product offerings in last year's Philippine Fiesta in New Jersey.

Exhibit in US to showcase RP products, manufacturers

THE PHILIPPINE Fiesta in America 2005 will be held on Aug. 20-21 at the Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus, New Jersey, United States.

Organized by New York-based Special Edition Press Inc., the event is now on its seventh year and is the largest indoor gathering of Filipino Americans on the east coast with an average attendance of 20,000. It offers an avenue for manufacturers and service providers from the Philippines and the Untied States to promote and sell their products and services. Every year, participation of mainstream companies has increased consistently for the past seven years. Big corporations in the United States including Western Union, JP Morgan Chase Co., International Channel, Verizon and Costco are participating in this event as major sponsors.

Filipino companies vying for a share of the affluent Filipino-American market in the US have to contend with an increasing number of mainstream companies that have been tailoring their marketing campaigns to respond to the rise of the Asian American market as an important growth area.

"These days it's no longer surprising to see Asians, including Filipinos, featured in prime-time television and print advertising for a wide range of products and services. Filipino companies can no longer afford to be complacent," says Mila Mendez, vice president for marketing of Special Edition Press Inc.

"Some rethinking has to be done. Philippines-based companies cannot keep on banking on the assumption that their products and services will continue to be an easy sell among Filipino Americans," she says.

The US Census in 2000 placed the Asian-American population in the US at some 12 million, or 4.2 percent of the total population of just over 281 million. After Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans comprise the second largest Asian minority group, leading all Asian nations in total immigration in the 1980s and 90s. But it is not just the headcount that has American companies sitting up and taking notice. The Asian American population is the most affluent demographic segment in the US today, and holds a more favorable economic profile than the non-Hispanic white population.

Gov't works to spare the poor from taxes

From page B1

come tax, he proposed that the government should then raise the income tax rate of high-earning individuals or companies.

The DOF is looking at increasing the highest income tax rate both for corporate and individual taxpayers from the current 32 percent to 35 percent, he said.

"That way, we do not lose anything on the income tax collection," the newly appointed finance chief said.

The VAT reform proposal being pushed by the Arroyo administration includes raising the rate from 10 to 12 percent, and expanding the coverage of the tax by removing the VAT exemption currently enjoyed by some sectors, like doctors and lawyers.

Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate committee on ways and means, earlier suggested that the government should keep the VAT rate at 10 percent, and just remove more VAT exemptions.

But the DOF said that the increase in the VAT rate was necessary because of the huge impact the added revenue would have on the troubled government.

The VAT hike proposal is estimated to yield P35 billion in additional annual revenues.

During a forum on the Philippines' fiscal issues on Saturday, former Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong defended the proposal to increase the VAT rate.

She said the critics were exaggerating when they described the VAT hike as anti-poor.

Amatong cited a study which showed that the 12 -percent VAT hike would only increase prices by less than 2 percent. She stressed that products like fish and vegetables, commonly purchased by poor families, would not be covered by VAT.

Rep. Jesli Lapus, chair of the House committee on ways and means, said that while there could be alternatives, they could not compare with the twin VAT proposals—increase in rate and lifting of exemptions—in terms of revenue impact.

The two measures are expected to yield about P60 billion in incremental revenue a year.

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Participating Stores

Store	Phone
Manila	
Compex - SM Manila	4004647
Compex - Tutuban Mall	2531615
Diamond Dreamchum	5227420
Mega Merge	7362649
Best Buy Computer	2548547
Pioneer Computer	4009598
Alabang	
Compex - SM South Mall	8067006
Starapple-SM South Mall	8007026/27
Dreamchum II	8003691
Compex - Festival Mall	8503654
PC Madness-Festival Mall	8503859
Starapple - Festival Mall	8503942
Compex - SM Sucat	8254467
PC Supplies	8524293
Quezon City	
MCA CD Romania	3238888
Bayan PC	6870710
SmartLink System	3631239
Techpoint	7231254
PC Madness	7248472
Cainta Rizal	
Compex - Sta Lucia Mall	6465640
Caloocan	
Pinnade Technologies	323 8888
Multi Trust Computer	363 1239
SM MegaMall	
Compex	6331862
Villman	6830532
Brochiere	6332172
SM West	
Compex	9204610
Villman	9267322
Amazon	4266860
Shangrila	
Starapple	6374295
Makati	
Compex - Parksquare	9288382
Villman - Parksquare	7527758
Starapple-Makati Cinema	8111422/24
Quezon City (Gilmore)	
PC Specialist I	7232950/60
PC Specialist II	4100158
PC City	7051326
PC Outlet	4102829
PC House	7264314
PC Options	4151488
Luzon	
Pinnacle Technology - Bulacan	(044) 6620634
Planet Earth - Vigan	(077) 6320546
Maxan Computer - Laoag	(077) 7731556
Northpoint Computer - Laoag	(077) 7703521
New Ongto Expressmart - Iriga	(054) 2992550
RCA - Cavite	(054) 2995678
RCA - Lucena	(042) 6603899
RCA - Naga	(054) 8118483
Prologue - Laguna	(049) 5362057
PC 4 Me - LaUnion	(072) 888 2249
SKM - La Union	(072) 8885339
Laser Marketing - Baguio	(074) 4425854
PC King - Baguio	(074) 4428357
Visayas	
Delta Merchandising-Iloilo	(033) 3363196
Hardycom - Bacolod	(034) 4338705
Mindanao	
Datavision - Iligan	(063) 221 2973
Global PC Computer - Butuan	(085) 3411188
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PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
Citystate Centre 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City
Healthline 637-9999 www.philhealth.gov.ph

8 February 2005

PHILHEALTH CIRCULAR
No. 2 , s – 2005

TO : ALL CONCERNED

SUBJECT : PHILHEALTH GUIDELINES FOR MEMBERS AND DEPENDENTS TO IMPLEMENT THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT (R.A) 9257, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "EXPANDED SENIOR CITIZENS ACT OF 2003"

I. COVERAGE AND SCOPE

This circular shall apply to all PhilHealth members and dependents who are 60 years old and above; and to all accredited PhilHealth institutional health facilities and health care professionals.

The circular provides the guidelines for benefits availment of PhilHealth members and dependents and additional accreditation rules for institutional health facilities and health care professionals.

II. APPLICATION OF SENIOR CITIZENS' PRIVILEGE FOR HEALTH SERVICES

With regard to the implementation of R.A. 9257 and pursuant to Administrative Order No. 177 s-2004, the following are the application of senior citizens discount for health and dental services

A. Subsidized Services in In-patient and Out-patient Sections of Government Health Facilities:

Medical (includes surgical) and dental services, including diagnostic and laboratory fees for all senior citizens confined in service wards of government facilities shall be provided for free as long as these are in accordance with available Clinical Practice Guidelines or Hospital Treatment Protocols, and therefore, medically necessary.

B. Non-subsidized Services in Pay Sections of Government Health Facilities

Medical and dental services, including diagnostic and laboratory fees for all senior citizens confined in pay sections (both in and out patient sections) of government health facilities shall be granted twenty percent (20%) discount, provided that these are in accordance with available Clinical Practice Guidelines or Hospital Treatment Protocols, and therefore, medically necessary.

C. Twenty Percent (20%) Discount on Services in Private Health Facilities

Medical and dental services, including diagnostic and laboratory fees such as, but not limited to, x-rays, computerized tomography scans and blood tests for all senior citizens confined in private hospitals and medical facilities shall be given a 20% discount. The services shall include the use of specialized treatment rooms and equipment such as those for hemodialysis and radiotherapy.

D. Twenty Percent (20%) Discount on Services of Health Care Professionals

Professional fees of attending health care professionals in all private hospitals and medical facilities for medical, surgical and dental services rendered to senior citizens shall also be given a twenty percent (20%) discount.

III. RULES on the APPLICATION of the SENIOR CITIZENS PRIVILEGES to the AVAILMENT of PHILHEALTH BENEFITS

A. Subsidized Services in In-patient and Out-patient Sections of Government Health Facilities

In any setting where the PhilHealth member or dependent will be provided subsidized care, the rules for the availment of PhilHealth benefits are as follows:

1. PhilHealth benefit reimbursement shall first be applied to all PhilHealth covered services (drugs/medicines, laboratories and supplies) that are not subsidized by the government facility. To facilitate this, the accredited facility shall compute for the total expenses (for services and items not subsidized) incurred by the patient and from therein deduct the appropriate PhilHealth Benefit. The facility must also ensure that all Official Receipts of such purchases are attached to the Claims applications for appropriate reimbursement.
2. After the above deductions are made, the remaining PhilHealth benefits (including professional fees), if there will still be, shall be applied to the cost of services/ items subsidized by the said facility and covered by PhilHealth.
3. In case of requests for adjustments of reimbursements for health expenses on the same admission, payment shall be made to the requesting party (member/hospital) provided expenses being claimed are not included in the claim application earlier submitted and that there are benefits balances available. No adjustment shall be made on any claim without the corresponding request and necessary documentation.

To illustrate,

SAMPLE CALCULATION

	AMOUNT
Total charges incurred for services provided to a senior citizen	P 25,000
Deduct Charges for services that is expected to be shouldered by the senior citizen *(PhilHealth benefits should be APPLIED FIRST on these charges)*	less P 5,000
Balance are Charges for services mandated to be provided free or fully subsidized to the senior citizen AND all 20% discounts *(PhilHealth benefits may NOW be APPLIED on the balance provided the benefit limits for the particular has not been fully applied to the charges that was supposed to be shouldered by the senior citizen)*	P 20,000

B. Twenty Percent (20%) discount on services in Pay Sections of Government Health Facilities and in Private Health Facilities

In a setting where the PhilHealth member or dependent will be provided the 20% discount for hospital services, the health facility must first deduct from the total hospital charges, the amount representing the 20% thereof. Only the remaining 80% or a portion of which, is chargeable correspondingly to PhilHealth. To illustrate,

SAMPLE CALCULATION
for HEALTH FACILITY (HOSPITAL) CHARGES

	AMOUNT
Applicable health facility charges	P10,000 less
Deduct 20% discount of senior citizen privilege	(P2,000)
Applicable charges for PhilHealth reimbursement	P 8,000 less
Deduct PhilHealth benefit coverage	(5,000)
Co-payment of senior citizen	P 3,000

C. Twenty Percent (20%) Discount on services of Health care professionals

In a setting where the PhilHealth member or dependent will be provided the 20% discount for health care professional services, the amount representing the 20% discount must first be deducted prior to the application of the PhilHealth benefit. Only the remaining 80% or a portion thereof, is chargeable to PhilHealth, subject to the following rules:

1) In calculating the PhilHealth reimbursement of professional fees, the health professional must first deduct the amount representing the 20% discount from the applicable fees. Only the remaining 80% or a portion thereof, is chargeable to PhilHealth. To illustrate,

SAMPLE CALCULATION
for PROFESSIONAL FEES

	AMOUNT
Applicable professional fees (PF)	P 5,000 less
Deduct 20% discount of senior citizen privilege	(P1,000)
Applicable charges for PhilHealth reimbursement	P 4,000 less
Deduct PhilHealth benefit coverage	(1,500)
Co-payment of senior citizen	P 2,500

2) If the PhilHealth member pays for the professional fees in full and opts to claim reimbursement of professional fees directly to PhilHealth through direct filing, the original of the OR must be attached to the claim.

3) In case of under-deduction of the PhilHealth benefit, the difference shall be paid to the member provided that the original OR is attached.

4) Accredited health care professionals shall issue to the member an official receipt (OR) with the 20% senior citizen's (SC) discount and the PhilHealth expected reimbursement or counter-part explicitly written.

SAMPLE of the OR *(or what should appear in the OR)*

Bobby Cruz, MD
Rm. 1904 State Hospital, Pasig City
TIN number: 123-456-789

OFFICIAL RECEIPT

No. 101
Date: February 2, 2005

RECEIVED from Mr. Leo Balisi 73/M
Address Kapitolyo, Pasig City
the SUM of Two thousand five hundred pesos (P2, 500)
in full/ partial payment of professional fees (PF)

Total charges		5,000
20% Senior citizens' discount	less	1,000
PF net of 20% SC Discount		4,000
PhilHealth reimbursement	less	1,500
PF net of PhilHealth		2,500

By: SIGNED
Authorized Signature

All other rules in benefit payment/reimbursement shall apply.

IV. RULES on ADDITIONAL WARRANTIES of ACCREDITATION to ENSURE the IMPLEMENTATION of RA 9257

A. ALL ACCREDITED HEALTH FACILITIES

Consistent with the warranties of accreditation that mandates all accredited health facilities to comply with all pertinent and applicable laws and regulations, all accredited health facilities are required to comply with the following requirements set in Administrative Order no. 177 s. of 2004:

1) The posting of hospital room rates, laboratory and diagnostic tests fees, medicine prices, professional fees for private patients, and all other fees and rates in conspicuous places near or at the main entrance of their respective facility.

2) The submission of the above-described price lists as an attachment for all application for initial accreditation, re-accreditation, or renewal of accreditation to PHIC;

3) The issuance of official receipts for every paid-for medical and dental services, laboratory and diagnostic tests, and medicines provided. The receipts shall state the usual rates or fees and the discounted price;

4) The setting up of grievance mechanisms for senior citizens in private health facilities to entertain questions with regards to discounts on professional fees;

5) The health facility-level guidelines on the disciplinary and reportorial procedures for health professionals who refuse to grant the proper discount.

Non-compliance with the aforesaid accreditation requirements shall be considered breach of warranties and may result in non-approval or application of non-renewal of accreditation or any other sanction provided for in the implementing rules and regulations of Republic Act 7875, as amended and RA 9257.

B. ALL ACCREDITED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Consistent with the warranties of accreditation that mandates all accredited health care professionals to comply with all pertinent and applicable laws and regulations, they shall be required to comply with the following requirements set in Administrative Order no. 177 s. of 2004:

1. Schedule of professional fees shall be posted in a conspicuous place in the office of the accredited physician or other health care professional.
2. The accredited health care professionals shall issue to the member an official receipt (OR) indicating there with the 20% senior citizen's (SC) discount and the PhilHealth expected reimbursement or counter-part. Both the patient's and the accredited health care professional's copies of the OR for covered services shall be made available to PhilHealth upon request.

V. EFFECTIVITY

These guidelines shall take effect 15 days after publication.

(Sgd) FRANCISCO T. DUQUE III, MD, MSc
Secretary
President and CEO

2 Japan banks inch closer to world's largest merger

Tokyo Mitsubishi, UFJ announce terms of merger

TOKYO—Two Japanese banking giants have announced the terms of their 3.99 trillion yen (US$38 billion) merger planned for later this year that will create the world's largest bank, including job cuts and a profit target.

Two of Japan's "Big Four" banks, Mitsubishi Tokyo Financial Group Inc. and UFJ Holdings Inc., agreed last year to merge their operations by October 2005.

The deal creates the world's largest bank with assets totaling nearly 190 trillion yen (US$1.8 trillion).

The merger ratio will be 0.62 Mitsubishi Tokyo share to one UFJ share, both sides said in a statement on Friday.

The merger is being challenged by rival Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group Inc., another "Big Four" bank, which is offering a one-for-one stock swap that will put a premium on UFJ shares.

Sumitomo Mitsui said in a statement late Friday it was studying the latest announcement and will soon respond.

Mitsubishi Tokyo and UFJ shareholders will be asked to approve the merger proposal at a meeting in June.

Standard & Poor's Ratings Service upgraded its long- and short-term ratings on UFJ Bank and UFJ Trust Bank late Friday, citing the stronger likelihood that the merger will be approved.

"The announced integration ratio is within market expectations and more detailed information on the merger has been released," the ratings firm said in a statement.

Standard & Poor's also affirmed its long-term ratings on Mitsubishi Tokyo bank and its trust banking unit, saying their credit quality will remain stable if the merger goes according to plan.

Mitsubishi Tokyo and UFJ said they plan to cut 6,000 jobs—or about 8 percent of their current combined global work force—in three years following the merger.

The merged banks will aim for a group net profit of 1.1 trillion yen (US$10 billion) in the 2008 fiscal year.

By the fiscal year ending March 2009, the combined entity will close 170 retail outlets out of some 900 they have now.

After the merger, the financial giant will go under the name Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, or MUFG, they said.

Sumitomo Mitsui has been trying to stop the Mitsubishi Tokyo-UFJ merger, although management at Mitsubishi Tokyo and UFJ have repeatedly said it will go ahead.

Ryosuke Tamakoshi, UFJ Holdings president, would become chairman of MUFG, with Mitsubishi Tokyo President Nobuo Kuroyanagi becoming the president.

Tamakoshi expressed confidence that the two groups ' strengths complement each other and that the merger can win shareholders' approval.

"We made the best decision," Tamakoshi told reporters. "I think we can gain approval."

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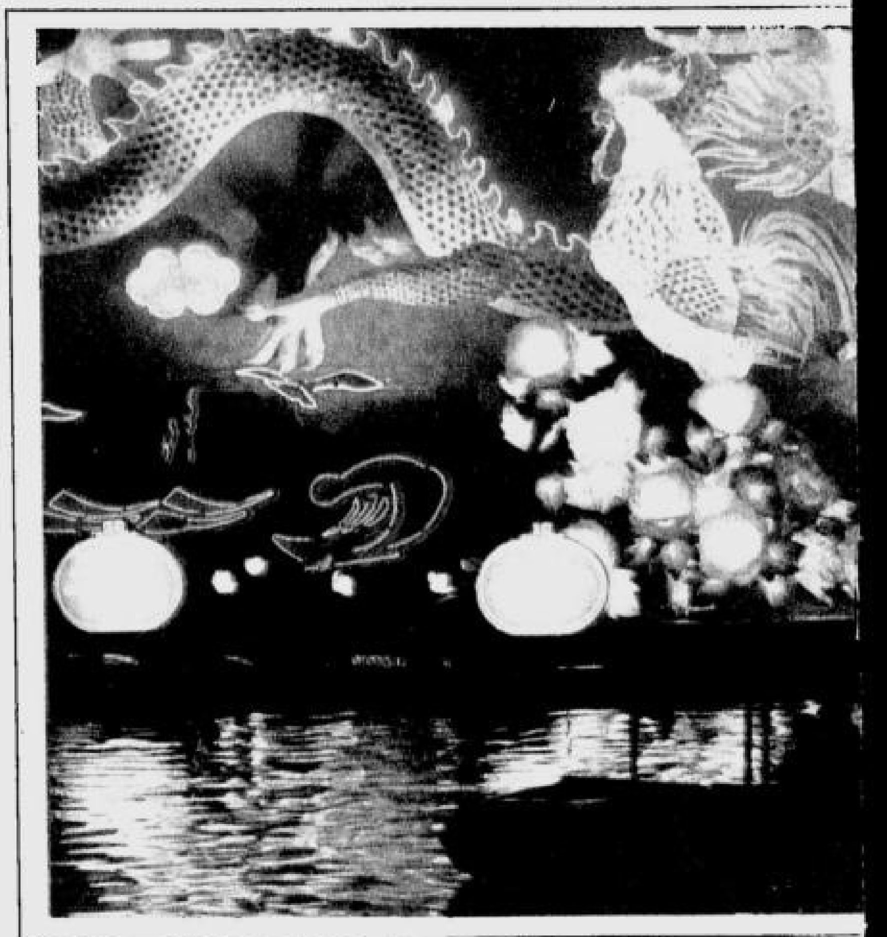

Shorthanded Malaysia

more firms hire foreign

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia—Malaysia, facing a severe labor shortage, plans to let more businesses hire foreign workers—a potential boon for labor-exporting countries such as Indonesia, Bangladesh and India, according to a newspaper report Saturday.

Currently, foreigners work mostly at rubber and oil palm plantations, construction sites, restaurants and as maids.

The Star newspaper quoted Home Minister Azmi Khalid as saying the farming sector, as well as small and medium-size industries, may also be allowed to hire temporary foreign workers at their busiest times—such as harvest season and high-production periods for factories.

These sectors would be allowed to have foreigners comprise up to 30 percent of their work force during peak seasons, the Star said.

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But Beijing's growing economic clout is tipping the scales in the region. The Caribbean trade with China reached $2 billion last year, a 42.5 percent increase from 2003, the Chinese news agency Xinhua reported.

The United States has applauded China's economic offensive, seeing it as a herald of political reform.

"China's intensified interest in the Western Hemisphere does not imply a lack of focus by the United States," Roger Noriega, the US assistant secretary for Western Hemisphere affairs, said in a recent letter to the editor of New Jersey's Newark Star Ledger. "The United States has long stood for expansion of global trade and consolidating democracy."

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"Democratic, market-oriented Taiwan is a thorn in its side," said Steve Johnson, senior policy analyst at the conservative Washington, DC-based Heritage Foundation.

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2 Japan banks inch closer to world's largest merger

Tokyo Mitsubishi, UFJ announce terms of merger

TOKYO—Two Japanese banking giants have announced the terms of their 3.99 trillion yen (US$38 billion) merger planned for later this year that will create the world's largest bank, including job cuts and a profit target.

Two of Japan's "Big Four" banks, Mitsubishi Tokyo Financial Group Inc. and UFJ Holdings Inc., agreed last year to merge their operations by October 2005.

The deal creates the world's largest bank with assets totaling nearly 190 trillion yen (US$1.8 trillion).

The merger ratio will be 0.62 Mitsubishi Tokyo share to one UFJ share, both sides said in a statement on Friday.

The merger is being challenged by rival Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group Inc., another "Big Four" bank, which is offering a one-for-one stock swap that will put a premium on UFJ shares.

Sumitomo Mitsui said in a statement late Friday it was studying the latest announcement and will soon respond.

Mitsubishi Tokyo and UFJ shareholders will be asked to approve the merger proposal at a meeting in June.

Standard & Poor's Ratings Service upgraded its long- and short-term ratings on UFJ Bank and UFJ Trust Bank late Friday, citing the stronger likelihood that the merger will be approved.

"The announced integration ratio is within market expectations and more detailed information on the merger has been released," the ratings firm said in a statement.

Standard & Poor's also affirmed its long-term ratings on Mitsubishi Tokyo bank and its trust banking unit, saying their credit quality will remain stable if the merger goes according to plan.

Mitsubishi Tokyo and UFJ said they plan to cut 6,000 jobs—or about 8 percent of their current combined global work force—in three years following the merger.

The merged banks will aim for a group net profit of 1.1 trillion yen (US$10 billion) in the 2008 fiscal year.

By the fiscal year ending March 2009, the combined entity will close 170 retail outlets out of some 900 they have now.

After the merger, the financial giant will go under the name Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, or MUFG, they said.

Sumitomo Mitsui has been trying to stop the Mitsubishi Tokyo-UFJ merger, although management at Mitsubishi Tokyo and UFJ have repeatedly said it will go ahead.

Ryosuke Tamakoshi, UFJ Holdings president, would become chairman of MUFG, with Mitsubishi Tokyo President Nobuo Kuroyanagi becoming the president.

Tamakoshi expressed confidence that the two groups ' strengths complement each other and that the merger can win shareholders' approval.

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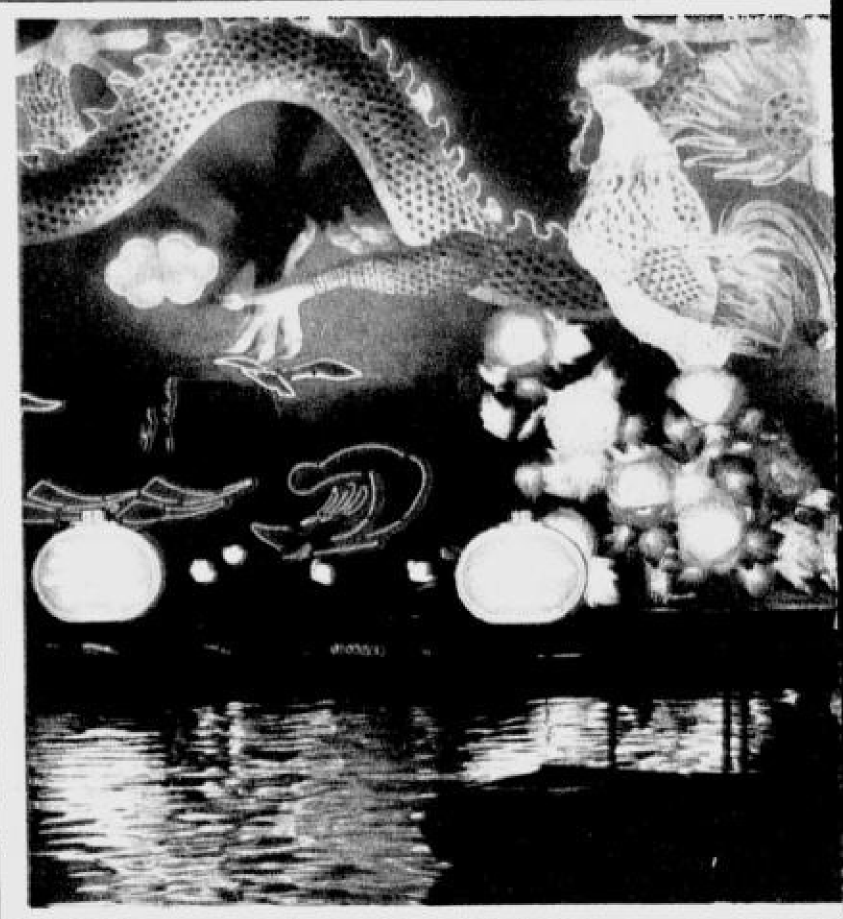

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NEON DRAGON
A WALL is decorated with a neon dragon at the Confucius Temple in downtown Nanjing, capital of east China's Jiangsu province. The Chinese traditional Lantern Festival falls on Feb. 23 this year. China is now waging an aggressive campaign in the Caribbean to woo countries away from rival Taiwan, open markets for its expanding economy, promising to send tourists in return (see story at the bottom).
REUTERS

may let labor

ned home since then, and the rest ve two more weeks before a crack-wn begins on March 1. Those ught after that would be charged, led and later deported.

The illegal worker problems had ured . Malaysia-Indonesia relans, but their governments made after Indonesian President Susilo mbang Yudhoyono recently visit-Malaysia.

Bangladesh, India, Nepal and the ilippines also supply legal works to Malaysia, but not as many as y would like.

The Star quoted Azmi as saying government plans to legalize landestine employment agents who w operate outside the law, supply-g foreign workers to industries. is would make the agents ac-untable for the workers' welfare d whereabouts, Azmi said. *AP*

m Taiwan

Rohee.

The Bahamas was one of the first in the region to abandon Taiwan, in 1997. The move came as Hutchisom Whampoa, a Beijing-allied Hong Kong company, opened a $114-million container port in Freeport and bought three hotel resorts in Nassau.

Since then, China has earmarked more than $1 billion for projects ranging from maritime transport to a sports complex.

CHINA/B12

US toymaker banks on Star Wars in '05

NEW YORK—Hasbro Inc., the No. 2 toy maker in the United States, unveiled a 2005 product line highlighting "Star Wars" toys, DVD games, the return of Furby and its classic brands on Friday just before the start of the American International Toy Fair this weekend.

The Pawtucket, Rhode Island-based Hasbro had a lackluster 2004 when once hot items like Beyblades spinning tops and the VideoNow handheld video player, did not perform as well as in past years.

For 2005, Hasbro plans to focus on consumer electronics for tweens, toys centered around the latest "Star Wars" movie and the relaunch of Furby, its interactive toy that was a best seller in the 1990s.

The latest installment of the Star Wars saga, called "Star Wars: Episode III Revenge of the Sith," was a big presence in Hasbro's showroom in Manhattan's toy district. There were dozens of items centered around the movie, which will open in May.

"I think Star Wars will be strong for them," said Sean McGowan, toy analyst with Harris Nesbitt. "They've managed expectations pretty low. It'll be solid."

Merchandise tied to "Star Wars" movies has been a focus for Hasbro since it bought Kenner in 1991. Some of the films have been better revenue drivers than others.

Piper Jaffray analyst Anthony Gikas estimated that "Star Wars" toy sales could reach $250 million in 2005. *Reuters*

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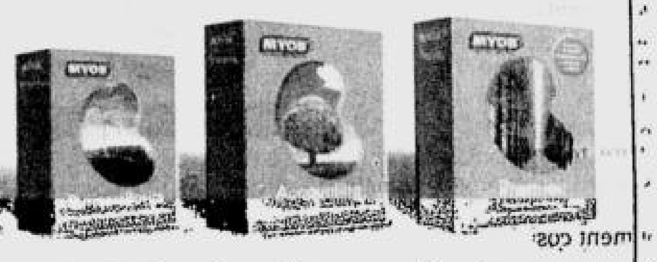

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Seated from left: Angelica Clariño, Ruena Guevara, Aurelio Clariño, Alma Clariño & Abegale Clariño.

Standing from left: Peter Creag, Connie Magalong, Ariel Fernandez, Eulline Pagalunan, Edith Padpad, Anna Santos, Dea Lubrin, Lydia Fermin, Nenita Guevara, Gie Tiamson, Evelyn de Guzman, June Lontoc, Rose Izon, Joy Labudahon, Anette Cerdeña, Rod Magalong, Ulysses Rodriguez, Rosie de Jesus, Tess Avila, Mila Ong, Cherie Dumaual & Caloy Sale.

Last row from left: Chris Morales, Connie Fernandez, Benny Obrero, Claire Wagas, Czarie Morales, Cenia Cayaban, Gina Dizon, Nory Lindo, Jun Cerdeña, Mon Calica, Larry Bisa & Noel Sanchez.

Not in picture: Ma. Cecilia Roldan, Victoria Lopez, Ronelle Guevara, Anna Cristine Clariño, Arlyn Grace Guico & Paulo Samuel Caluag

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Foreign investment to China rose to $4.1B in Jan.

Exports from world's seventh-biggest economy also hit $50.8 billion, up 42.2 percent

BEIJING—Foreign direct investment in booming China last month rose 10.72 percent from a year earlier to $4.1 billion, the Commerce Ministry said on Saturday.

But analysts say it is difficult to read too much into the monthly FDI figures, which are highly volatile.

China's exports have boomed in recent years thanks in part to huge investment inflows by foreign companies eager to tap into the country's cheap wages.

Exports from the world's seventh-biggest economy hit $50.8 billion in January, up 42.2 percent from a year earlier, while imports were $44.3 billion, up 24 percent.

Foreign direct investment in China rose more than 13 percent last year to almost $61 billion.

Contracts for planned foreign investment rose 27.69 percent in January from a year earlier to $12.8 billion, the Commerce Ministry said.

The FDI in December was $3.1 billion, down more than half from a year earlier.

China had a record haul of nearly $61 billion in foreign investment in all of 2004, compared with the $53.5 billion in 2003. Contracted FDI was $153.5 billion in 2004, up 33.4 percent on the year.

Economists expect other data for January, to be released next week, will show continued industrial strength coupled with easing consumer inflation, making it unlikely Beijing will need to raise interest rates again soon.

Worried that superheated growth in industries such as steel and property could unbalance the economy, China has adopted a series of measures since 2003 to curb credit and investment.

The steps included a tougher approval process for industrial projects, higher reserve requirements for banks and, in October, the first increase in lending interest rates in nine years. *Reuters*

In US, Hyundai projects elegant car maker image

SEOUL—Six years ago, US late-night talk show host Jay Leno compared Hyundai cars to luge sleds, saying you had to push to get them going and they only went downhill.

At the time, the wheels were coming off the Korean carmaker's drive to break into the US market and take on top US, European and Japanese auto manufacturers.

The Leno jibe and a slump in sales triggered an ambitious rethink at Hyundai Motor headquarters in Seoul.

A program to improve quality was launched and $5 billion earmarked in 1999 for developing new models.

The push to project its image as a maker of elegant and reliable sedans is now paying off.

Hyundai won the 2003 Global Automotive Shareholder Value Award presented by PriceWaterhouse Coopers and Automotive News.

It is now ranked seventh in the world in vehicle sales and controls more than 70 percent of the domestic market.

Hyundai began shedding its image as a cheap carmaker in 2000 when it shipped the Santa Fe SUV, or sport utility vehicle, in the United States. It sold 111,447 Santa Fes last year in the United States.

Its subcompact car, Getz, with a 1300-cc engine, was also a hit abroad. Since its debut in Europe in 2002, Hyundai has sold about 100,000 units annually there, with its popularity rising in Russia and India.

For Hyundai chair Chung Mong-Koo, the success of the image revamp has sparked even greater ambitions.

He aims to move upmarket and catapult Hyundai into the ranks of the world's five largest carmakers.

Hyundai has piled up enough cash to make the attempt, helped by strong exports which have offset a major setback in domestic sales linked to weak consumption.

Hyundai, including its affiliate Kia Motors and overseas units, sold 3.18 million units last year, up 24.7 percent from 2003.

Encouraged by his success, Chung unveiled an aggressive strategy to sell 3.73 million vehicles this year.

"Although this year will see many difficulties such as weak domestic demand, a global economic slowdown and unstable foreign exchange rates, we will continue our growth momentum and focus on quality and innovation," he said.

Hyundai set up the goal in August after unveiling its most advanced mid-sized model, the NF Sonata, a complete remake of the previous Sonata.

The company hopes the new Sonata, to be launched in the United States from its billion-dollar plant in Montgomery in March, will challenge popular Japanese models.

Hyundai sold 419,000 cars last year in the United States, up 4.6 percent from a year ago.

In January, the company opened a $60-million testing center in California. The 1,750-hectare facility followed years of surveying US consumer tastes.

In Europe, the Hyundai-Kia group says it hopes to open a $1.24-billion plant in Slovakia late this year.

Among other overseas production bases, Hyundai plans to set up its second auto plant in India by 2007 to boost capacity from 250,000 units to 400,000.

In China, the company saw sales rise sharply to 144,000 units in 2004, two years after it opened its first joint venture there. It has announced a $940-million investment plan to boost the capacity of its China facilities to 600,000 units a year.

"We will develop the Chinese unit into a focal point for overseas production by securing economies of scale and rolling out quality vehicles," Chung said.

Starting this year, Hyundai and Kia will introduce a dozen new models including the TG, an upgraded version of the Grandeur XG sedan, which will be unveiled at an auto show in Geneva in March.

The TG highlights Hyundai's efforts to dispel its image as a maker of cheap and compact cars.

The new sedan carries a new six-valve engine manufactured by Hyundai, to challenge Japanese giant Toyota Motor's Lexus, one of the world's best-selling sedans.

Hyundai plans to sell two TG models with engine displacements of 2,700 cc and 3,300 cc.

On the domestic front, Hyundai began selling a revamped Equus sedan with its own 3,800-cc engine last week to grab a bigger slice of the country's premium sedan market. *AFP*

China in seduction campaign . . .

From page B10

Grenada's Prime Minister Keith Mitchell said he expects future Chinese aid will be significant.

Early this month, Chinese Vice President Zeng Qinghong visited Jamaica for a three-day China-Caribbean economic and trade forum attended by hundreds of Chinese and Caribbean government officials and business executives.

Robert Stephens, chairman of Jamaica's Fair Trade Commission and senior vice president of the Jamaican Port Authority, looks forward to future deals.

"The Chinese would distribute goods throughout the Caribbean. Any increase in business would benefit Jamaica as a logistic distribution hub," he said.

By the end of the forum, China added Antigua, the Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Jamaica, and St. Lucia to its approved travel destinations, promising the region a bigger piece of the fast-growing Chinese tourist market.

Caribbean governments had sought the approved status to boost a tourism industry hard hit by the Sept. 11 terror attacks in the United States.

"Basically, it's the tourist trade that interests China," Johnson said. "I think they will try to invest in their own hotels and in maritime activities" while "consolidating their access to energy" in oil-producing Trinidad.

Qinghong this month led a delegation of 120 to Trinidad and visited its Pitch Lake, which produces asphalt used to pave many Chinese highways and the runways at Beijing International Airport.

China, already the leading importer of Trinidad asphalt, is a good prospect for even more business as Beijing develops infrastructure for the 2008 Olympic Games and World Expo 2010, a Chinese government statement said.

In the Caribbean, only five countries still maintain relations with Taiwan—the Dominican Republic, Haiti, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

But China has commercial missions in the Dominican Republic and in Haiti where, in October, China dispatched 95 police officers to join a UN peacekeeping force. It is Beijing's first contribution to a UN mission in the Western Hemisphere.

The United States and China once were mortal enemies.

When China became communist in 1949, the United States supported Taiwan, the island where the former Chinese government had taken refuge. US troops fought Chinese soldiers during the 1950-53 Korean War.

But in 1971 the United Nations gave Beijing the China seat and Taiwan was expelled. In 1979, the United States recognized China's legitimacy. In 2001, China entered the World Trade Organization and foreign investment in China shot to $153.5 billion last year, up 33 percent from 2003.

Last year, China's share of global output was 13 percent—more than that of Canada and almost twice that of Japan.

US exports to China have grown more rapidly than to any other country, with cumulative investment there reaching $35 billion, according to the State Department. *AP*

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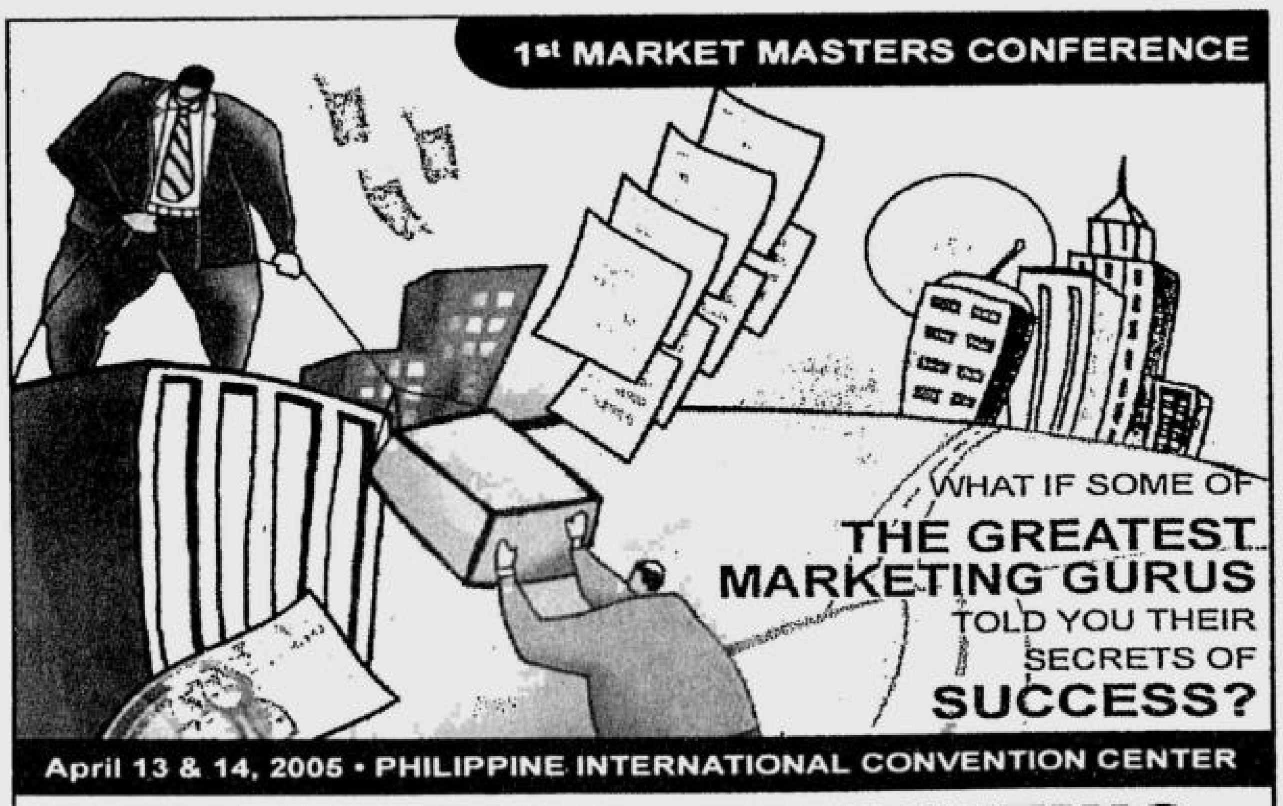

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RP ICT workforce demand to grow to .2M

FORMOSO

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

DEMAND for skilled information technology workers is expected to grow 29 percent to 207,000 in 2005 from 160,000 last year, according to a survey from SGV.

The ICT Workforce Demand Survey, commissioned to the SGV by the IT Association of the Philippines (ITAP), showed that 80 percent or 37,000 of the estimated demand will be employed in the ICT-enabled services sector.

ITAP received financial assistance from the United States Assistance for International Development through the IT Association of America.

ITAP president Dittas Formoso said the results show that the demand side of the ICT industry has been growing steadily, especially with the onset of more business process outsourcing providers.

Formoso said the 12-week survey, which ended last December, covered 214 local organizations classified as ICT and non-ICT service providers that have specific ICT workforce requirements.

The survey showed that the five most frequently found technical ICT skills are Windows OS programming, SQL server, Oracle database development network design and Visual Basic.

The last two, including Java programming, are expected to be the top three most in demand technical skills.

Formoso said they are looking for additional funding to conduct a follow-up survey to look into the ICT workforce supply side, which will cover ICT learning institutions.

Nonetheless, Formoso said the most frequent suggestion during the ICT workforce demand survey was for the country's educational system to align the school curricula with industry needs.

Another suggestion was to have stronger marketing and promotional strategies to promote ICT services overseas.

New viruses spreading via websites, instant messengers

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

ABINGDON, United Kingdom—Virus researchers at Sophos Labs have discovered more complex viruses that can infect users by visiting a website or chatting with friends via instant messaging.

"We've seen less e-mail worms because Internet gateway protection is getting better and because users are getting more cautious," said Vanja Svajcer, principal virus researcher at Sophos Labs.

Svajcer said trojans, or computer programs that can remotely control an infected computer, are increasingly being hidden in websites.

These trojans usually drop so-called spyware and keylogger programs aimed at stealing username and password and other confidential information on infected computers, Svajcer said.

Sophos Labs researchers have also seen computer viruses that spread through instant messaging services like MSN Messenger.

About 800 to 1,000 viruses are detected and identified by Sophos Labs every year. As of January 2005, 53 percent of the computer viruses detected were classified as trojans, 42 percent were Windows32 viruses, and the rest were Macro and other types of viruses, said Svajcer.

More than 100,000 viruses have been detected by Sophos Labs since January 2005.

The emergence of viruses that exploit vulnerabilities in operating systems has also kept virus researchers busy, said Svajcer.

The MSBlaster is an example of a "lethal" computer virus that exploits holes in the Windows operating system, he said.

Bofra—a virus that combines "phishing," spam, a trojan and a denial of service attack—is another emerging complex virus that has baffled virus researchers at Sophos Labs.

In 2004, Sasser and Netsky dominated virus reports. Both are viruses that spread via e-mail.

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Philippines stays in US watch list of IP violators

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

THE PHILIPPINES remains in the International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA) list as one of the countries that continue to violate international laws on intellectual property protection. This is despite efforts by the local Intellectual Property Office and the Optical Media Board (OMB) to rid major Philippine cities of bootlegged or pirated products.

In a report submitted to the United States Trade Representative (USTR) last Feb. 11, IIPA recommended 14 other countries in a priority watch list of IP violators for 2005. With the Philippines are Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Kuwait, Lebanon, the People's Republic of China, South Korea, and Thailand.

The USTR has a central role in the US government's international trade relations and the forging of trade policies governing the US and its partners. Using IIPA data, the USTR's Special 301 Report is the basis of US decisions regarding trade relations with other countries.

The IIPA report noted high losses in the motion picture, music, business and entertainment (game and interactive applications) software in 2004. It said that movie piracy rate in the Philippines is estimated at 85 percent, with losses amounting to $33 million. Music piracy is 40 percent, with $20 million in losses. Business and entertainment software piracy is estimated to be 70 and 90 percent respectively. IIPA estimated losses only in pirated business software to be $38 million. Overall losses totaled an estimated $139 million.

The IIPA has also recommended to the USTR that the Philippines, along with Malaysia and China, be included in its "out-of-cycle" reviews by the latter part of 2005. This review looks into a country's anti-piracy activities and evaluates how well its government is controlling the underground economy.

Newly appointed IPO Director General Adrian Cristobal Jr. has promised to further implement government's anti-piracy drive. In his stint as Undersecretary for Consumer Rights in the Department of Trade and Industry, Cristobal vowed to remove the Philippines from the priority watch list of the United States.

RP market for custom software to reach $83.4M in 2008

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

THE CUSTOM software market in the Philippines is expected to earn around $83.4 million in 2008, according to a study by the International Data Corp. (IDC).

The study noted that the local custom software market—expected to experience an annual growth rate of 12.8 percent—finally picked up in 2004 as more local companies have begun investing in locally developed applications.

Multinational companies and large enterprises are the primary clients of custom software, the study said.

With this trend, service providers are expected to develop their own niches as they design applications for vertical markets, the study said.

The study also found that more local custom software service providers were doing more offshore projects. With this trend, smaller players are seen inheriting more local deals that the bigger players leave behind in pursuit of larger foreign contracts, the study said.

Meanwhile, the study noted that local custom software service providers still consider price a crucial factor when bidding for deals with local companies. IDC expects that local providers will initially reduce support cost to attract more clients.

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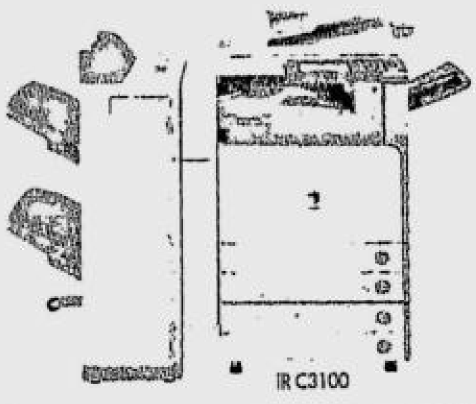

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*Source: according to "Gartner Dataquest, May 2004 [illegible]". Canon copiers have the no. 1 market share in the world in terms of the total units sales of plain paper copiers in black and white and color, analogue and digital categories (Data for 2003). Worldwide market excluding Canada, South America, Middle East and Africa

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People, Events & Products

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

RP's first Car of the Year revealed Feb. 24

SIXTY-ONE motor vehicles introduced in 2004 are in the running for the first Car of the Year (Coty) Award in the Philippines. All 61 underwent instrumental and qualitative tests during a six-weekend evaluation period at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in the last quarter of 2004.

The Car Awards Group Inc. (Cagi), a non-stock, non-profit organization of motoring journalists that initiated Car of the Year Philippines, will hold its awarding ceremony at the Rockwell Tent at the Plaza, Makati City on Feb. 24. co-presented by the Automobile Association of the Philippines, and sponsored by the Manila Motor Show, Standard Insurance Co Inc. and Rockwell Land, motoring journalists will announce their choice of the car of the year for 2004.

Their decisions are based on results of the testfest, wherein they cast their ballots for what they consider the best in 10 different categories. These are the super mini, sport compact, executive sedan, luxury sedan, ultra-luxury sedan, Asian utility vehicle, pick-up, minivan/people carrier, compact/light sport utility vehicle and luxury/full-sized SUV.

From these will emerge the overall Car of the Year. The results of the instrumental/quantitative and qualitative tests are now secured with auditing firm Sycip, Gorres and Velayo. The winners of five special awards-Best Safety Package, Best Value for Money, Best in Overall Design, Best Marketing Campaign and Best in Technical Innovation-will also be announced Feb. 24.

Car industry leaders, government officials, media personalities and sponsors such as Manila North Tollways Corp will be present during the awards night. The winning Car of the Year will be displayed at the Power Plant Mall for three days during the weekend of Feb. 25 to 27.

To ensure unbiased judging of the participating vehicles, no car manufacturers were allowed to sponsor any part of the event, including the six weekends of testing held at the Eagle Ridge in Cavite. The Car of the Year is supported by Bosch Philippines, Bridgestone, Reebok, Caltex and Auto Depot Ortigas. Coca-Cola Exports provides the beverage.

1st
CAR OF THE YEAR AWARDS
Find out the best of the best

PNPA RECEIVES SERVICE VEHICLES
Philippine National Police Academy Director Chief Supt. German Doria receives the keys for one Toyota Tamaraw FX and one motorcycle from Supt. Manuel Lukban of the PNPA Alumni Association Inc. The two vehicles were donated by Reynaldo 'Bombie' Espinelli of R. Espinelli, dealer of guns, ammunitions, spare parts and accessories. The vehicles will be used for patrolling inside and outside PNPA in Silang, Cavite.

Expo for F&B industry at PICC

THE SEVENTH International Food & Beverage Manufacturing and Technologies Expo (F&B Manu Tech) is the only engineering event that caters to the food and beverages industry. It will be held from June 22 to 24 at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) Forum.

The term "engineering" refers to the diverse technologies, equipment and machineries that that cover the whole of F&B manufacturing (production, brewing, baking), packaging (bottling and retail re-packing), storage and distribution (refrigeration, logistic, display appliances) industries and its allied services.

The Training Institute of Manila Engineers (TIME) Foundation, organizers of this annual project, encourages all F&B manufacturing and technologies-intensive companies to participate in the event. The event is considered to be the venue for all manufacturing and technological needs of F&B businesses, owners, purchasing managers, R&B and technical officers of food and beverage companies, restaurants, hotels, and fast food chains.

For inquiries, call Cut Unlimited Inc at 687-0654, 687-2955 and 687-0604 or e-mail cut@pacific.net.ph.

Panasonic unveils X700 smartphone for mobile junkies

PANASONIC'S showroom was recently opened at Glorieta 3. Shown during the inauguration were, from left, Hiroshi Otani, director, system sales department, Panasonic Phils), Marc Nelson (TV personality and Panasonic's mobile phone endorser), and Chito Limcaoco (managing director of Comcore, distributor of Panasonic).

JAPANESE phone maker Panasonic Mobile Communications Co Ltd is kicking off the new year with its most advanced GSM handset expected to take the mobile phone market by storm.

The X700 smartphone is a fully packed, fully functional and fully stylish digital video camera phone that comes in Panasonic's compact clamshell design. It is the company's first handset to use Symbian Operating System (OS) and the Series 60 Platform, which are increasingly bringing advanced mobile data services to the mass market. With these features, the X700 smartphone allows users to view and edit presentations and documents, which can then be seamlessly connected to other compatible audio-video equipment. In addition, the X700's digital camera, video recording and playback, e-mail and multimedia messaging capabilities make it one of the most technically advanced mobile phones in the market today.

"We are very excited with the X700 smartphone, which will appeal to the increasing number of users requiring compact and stylish mobile phones. We are confident that Panasonic's X700 will be the first brand of choice with its features that fit users' specific needs and give them pleasure of use at the same time," says Hiroshi Otani, Panasonic Philippines' director for system sales department.

Otani also adds that aside from being one of the most advanced GSM handsets in the industry, the X700 smartphone is one of the smallest and lightest smartphones available.

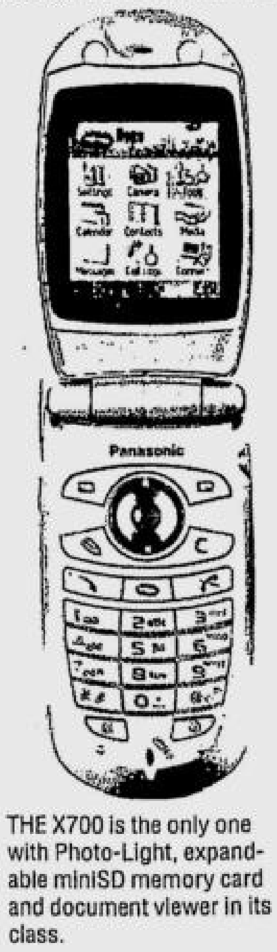
Form definitely follows function in this attractively designed phone. In this model, Panasonic has put together one of the most technologically advanced GSM mobile handsets in the market-a VGA camera, high-quality screen and PDA-like functionality, all in a compact clamshell design. The X700 also supports a series of pre-loaded applications. It has what Panasonic calls Quick Office, which allows users to view and edit native Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents on their handset.

Also noteworthy is the phone's miniSD card that provides additional memory to store files. The X700 is the only one in its category that has the memory card just behind the phone (upper portion), which is easily accessible unlike other units that store the memory card under the battery.

By using the miniSD adapter, the user can easily link these to other Panasonic audio-video equipment. The X700 also supports multimedia messaging system (MMS), e-mail and Bluetooth, allowing users to send photos and documents to a PC or MMS-enabled phone. Its Bluetooth capability also allows wireless connectivity through a Bluetooth hands-free headset and when connecting remotely through a laptop. In addition, its tri-band capabilities allow users to take advantage of the X700's features and services while abroad.

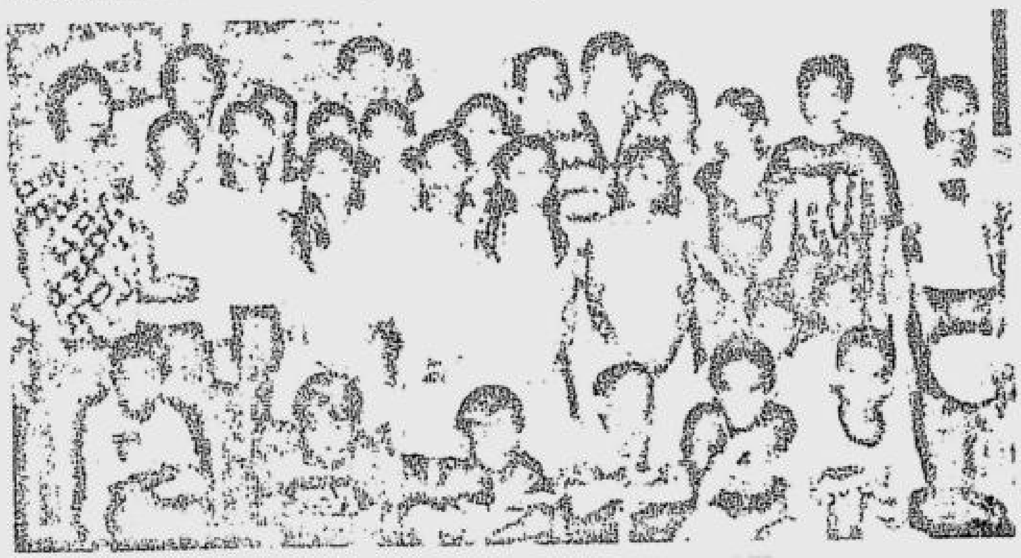
Users can also take clearer pictures with the X700's built-in VGA digital camera, photo light and 65,536-color Thin Film Transistor (TFT) display screen. They can also further enhance the quality of images with the handset's editing capabilities and store more images with the miniSD card. Users can also download further applications, polyphonic ring tones and games with the phone's Java capability.

Available at P24,990, the X700 smartphone is definitely an advanced clamshell model that packs a punch for business and personal users alike. The X700 is available at Panasonic's latest showroom at the Digital Exchange Section, 3rd floor of Glorietta 3 Mall. The showroom was officially opened last December and was graced by Panasonic officials headed by Otani, Chito Limcaoco, managing director of Comcore, distributor of Panasonic phones, and TV personality and Panasonic mobile phone endorser Marc Nelson.



THE X700 is the only one with Photo-Light, expandable miniSD memory card and document viewer in its class.

EXPRESSMILES TRAVEL & TOURS LAUNCHED
Traveling to the most amazing destinations in Asia, Europe, the Americas, and anywhere in the world is not difficult anymore. Expressmiles Travel & Tours, located at the 2nd level of Building 3 of the Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall in Cainta, Rizal, has recently opened, and welcoming distinguished guests were travel coordinators led by its president Matilde Robles and CEO Jayson Robles, VP for finance and administration Ellen D. Pecson, VP for marketing Augustine Cayabyab Jr, ticketing officer Lalie Ceberte and travel consultants Paul Michael and Michelle Robles, and Carlos Pecson Jr. Shown at the grand opening were, from left, Jimmy Lucas, Diding Robles, Aireen Go, Cory Quirino, Dominga S. Robles, Jestoni Alarcon and Annie Andres.



HCMI 'POWER OF DREAMS 4' SUPPORTS BOOK DRIVE
Honda Cars Makati Inc (HCMI) played host for two consecutive Saturdays to its fun kiddie event, 'Power of Dreams 4: Bea-ry Merry Weekends'. Nearly 300 children trooped to the showrooms of Honda Cars Makati, Pasig, Alabang and Shaw to participate in this pre-Christmas activity. This is also in support to the League of Corporate Foundations (LCF) and Ayala Foundation Inc's (AFI) storybook drive campaign 'Sa Pagbasa, May Pag-asa'. In 2004's 'Power of Dreams 4', HCMI has taken an active role in sharing LCF's mission of collecting 1 million storybooks by February 2005 to be donated to various public elementary schools in the country. HCMI is a member of the Ayala Group of Companies.

Bits Clips

AV scriptwriting book

A NEW book on scriptwriting for corporate videos and marketing AVPs is now available at Merriam Webster bookstore outlets. Titled "Audio Visual Scriptwriting", the book is written by veteran copywriter and AVP scriptwriter Nicolas Amadus Tayag. Tayag has been writing AVPs for more than 25 years, and the book is a distillation of what he has learned through the years. The reader can scan a selection of sample scripts that author has written for a variety of clients and production houses.

Confab reset

THE ORGANIZERS of the conference "Enhancement of health care services in a devolved health care system: a regional sharing of experiences" announces its postponement from Nov. 18, 2004 to February 2005. The conference was organized as a venue for the city of Manila, Municipality of Plasencia in Spain and the region of Tuscany and Pisa in Italy to share their health care system improvement project for other cities and municipalities to benefit. For more details, call Lani Briosos of the Philippine Business for Social Progress at 527-7741 local 104.

Italy's flavors

THE ITALIAN cuisine offers a sumptuous collection of distinct flavors and flares, but only one captures the whole world's taste and satisfies appetites-pasta. You can bring this well-loved Italian specialty to your dining tables with Julius Maggi Kitchen's E Pasta cooking demo this February. Join chef Florabel Co, formerly of Le Souffle and Top of the Citi, and learn recipes like carbonara, Bolognese, lasagna, baked macaroni, and other mouth-watering varieties. Chef Florabel will also share secrets to preparing pasta the E-xcellent, E-conomical, and E-asy way. This free cooking demo and lecture will be held on Feb. 22, 24 and 26 from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Julius Maggi Kitchen, ground floor of the Nestle Center, 31 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati. For inquiries, call 723-7679 or 726-1016.

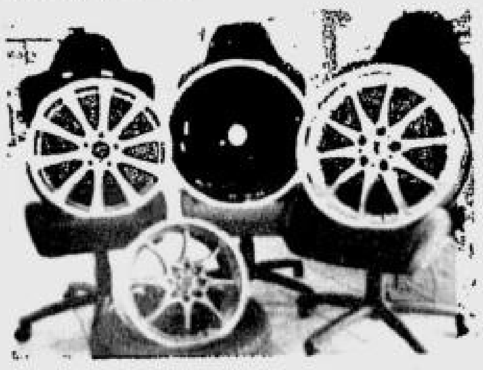
ProductFILES

Spice up your SUV

ENHANCE and improve your SUV's looks and performance with Wheel Gallery's newest line of after market "Bling-Bling" wheels, the country's renowned and pioneering "Dub" Shop. Wheel Gallery caters to the niche market for the growing demand for the latest, imported, big-size aftermarket chrome alloy wheels that are hard to find in the domestic market.

As a company known for setting the trend in the local tuning industry, Wheel Gallery has the latest and meanest looking set of aftermarket wheels designed to maximize the sex appeal of your luxury SUV. Shown, from left, are M5, Stryke, Infinite and (bottom) CE28 in titanium finish. They are shown with retooled Concept One bucket seats, perfect for both home and office use.

These large diameter 18 to 24-inch aftermarket chrome wheels are licensed by various international standard organizations like the Japan Wheel License (JWL), Vehicle Inspection Association (VIA), Specialty Equipment Manufacturer's Association (Sema), ISO9000, QS9000 and TUV. For inquiries, log on to www.conceptonewheels.com or visit Kartek Center, 318 Santolan Road corner M. Paterno, San Juan or call 724-2739/721-7176.



Government urged to change the way it sets revenue targets

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL government should change the way it sets its revenue targets because the goals have little to do with the country's fiscal sector, according to Rep. Jesli Lapus, chair of the House committee on ways and means.

"If the government is meeting its targets, then why are we still short of money, and why is tax collection only equivalent to 12.5 percent of GDP [gross domestic product]?" Lapus on Saturday said during a forum on the Philippines' fiscal situation organized by the Philippine Press Institute.

Lapus stressed the government's need to raise its target-setting standards by saying that the government is still in a difficult fiscal position despite the fact that revenue targets are being met.

Lapus explained that the government would tend to use the previous year's revenue collection as basis in making a revenue target for a current year.

He said that historic revenue collection should not be made the basis for making a new target.

He then went on to cite the huge revenue leaks that characterized past revenue performances.

He suggested that the collection targets of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs—the two top revenue earners of the government—should take into account the leakages of the previous year.

This means that, hypothetically, if the Bureau of Customs were to lose P100 billion a year due to smuggling, then the amount should be added to its collection target for the current year.

In the case of the BIR, the average tax leaks of the previous years should be taken into account when it sets its new tax collection target, Lapus said.

The congressman suggested that the implementing rules and regulations of the recently passed Attrition Act of 2005, which are still being drafted by the executive branch, should incorporate the average amount of tax leakages in the past when setting new targets for the BIR and the BOC.

The Attrition Act provides a system of reward and punishment for the government's revenue collectors.

Those who will surpass their collection targets will get incentives, while those who will fail to achieve their collection goals could be dismissed from service.

"My worry is that the government might set low targets under the Attrition law, and therefore it will be giving out incentives without having taken the country out of its fiscal trouble," he said.

"If the government is meeting its targets, then we should already be out of the woods. If it meets its targets, [and yet] we are still in trouble, then there must be something wrong with the targets."

Lapus admitted that plugging all revenue leakages might be too much to expect. Therefore, he suggested that a certain percentage, say 20 percent, of past leakages, be incorporated in the current revenue target.

He said a good starting target would be to improve the government's revenue-to-GDP ratio from last year's 12.5 percent to 17 percent, which the government already accomplished in 1997.

Former Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong, for her part, agreed that the current system of target-setting should be reformed to better reflect the level at which the government should be improving its revenue collection.

She also noted that setting a new revenue target based on the assumed GDP growth for a year would not be appropriate because of the sectors in the economy that are tax-exempt.

She cited last year's GDP growth that was boosted largely by the rise in the output of the agriculture sector.

"GDP alone cannot be the sole basis for setting targets because the agriculture and the IT sectors, for instance, are not taxed," she said. "This explains why tax collection is not growing as fast as the GDP."

This year, the BIR is tasked to collect P546 billion, while the BOC is required to contribute P147 billion to state coffers.

Last year, revenue collection of both agencies exceeded that of the previous year.

In 2004, the BIR collected P470 billion, while the BOC collected P122 billion.

Charter firm strengthens Asia service

GLOBAL charter service innovator Bombardier Skyjet International wants Asia-Pacific travelers to know that they can now enjoy seamless business travel services through its Hong Kong headquarters and a growing network of charter providers.

"With Bombardier Skyjet International, we are rebranding our existing Flexjet Asia-Pacific and Flexjet Europe programs, merging their best practices and combining them with a new operation in the Middle East," said Judith Moreton, managing director, Bombardier Skyjet International. "This will enable us to offer unrestricted and fixed-price access to more than 900 business jets worldwide through out Jet Membership Card."

As the leading business jet manufacturer in Asia-Pacific, with a 33-percent market share and a regional sales headquarters in Hong Kong, Bombardier continues to strengthen its presence in the region by introducing new business aircraft models into service and by working with regulatory authorities to facilitate corporate travel between countries.

Bombardier Skyjet International groups together a network of leading business jet charter operators in Asia-Pacific, Europe, the Middle East and North America.

Bombardier Skyjet International is the only service of its kind to be developed by a business aircraft manufacturer. It offers access to more than 5,500 airports worldwide.

Insurance firm sees P800 in earnings from new product

By Doris C. Dumlao

LEADING insurer Philippine American Life and General Insurance Co. (Philamlife) expects to raise about P800 million this year from a pioneering product that combines term life insurance with an investment-linked benefit.

During the launching of AIG Money Multiplier Thursday night, Philamlife president Rex Mendoza said the company was initially offering this new product in peso denominations, as there was stronger appetite for the local currency.

Mendoza said the peso-denominated AIG Money Multiplier would mobilize about P400 million in new investments this year. Another P400 million, he said, could be raised from a dollar offering of the same product later this year.

The pioneering product, which targets the middle income market, requires a minimum investment of P60,000 a year or about P5,000 a month for 10 years.

"AIG Money Multiplier is a flexible, potentially high-yielding insurance investment package that lets your wealth grow and gives you the life protection you deserve," Mendoza said.

The 10-year plan provides the holder with life protection benefits and safeguards investments as well. It also ensures maximum life protection by getting additional coverage in case of an accident while having the benefit of income continuation in the event of total and permanent disability.

For every purchase of the AIG Money Multiplier plan, a portion of the payment will be allocated to an investment fund, either the Philamlife Fixed Income Fund or the Philamlife Equity Fund.

The first is a type of investment in credible corporate and government securities while the latter invests in listed stocks and other direct equity investments.

Depending on the client's risk appetite, there is likewise the option to apportion the investment between the two funds as well as the switch between the two funds anytime and redeem a portion for emergency needs.

The plan allows the flexibility to pay beyond the required paying period in order to increase the investment portfolio.

"You also have the option of letting your investment pay for your plan and not miss any premium requirement," Mendoza said.

CDC prexy retires

CLARK Development Corp. president and chief executive officer Emmanuel Y. Angeles announced Saturday his retirement from government service effective March 16, 2005.

ANGELES

A lawyer and educator by profession, Angeles is turning 69 on July 8, 2005.

"I felt it is time for me to embark on another chapter of my life after successfully achieving what I have initially envisioned for Clark," said Angeles at a luncheon reception attended by family, friends and leaders from the business, government, civic and education sectors.

On several occasions, Angeles had expressed his desire to leave CDC but was consistently rebuffed by President Macapagal-Arroyo. Angeles assumed office in March 2001 amid immense labor, and economic problems at the Clark Special Economic Zone (CSEZ).

After improving the core services of CDC, which heightened investor confidence, more employment was generated. From 70,388 jobs in 2001, the figure zoomed to 112,536 in 2004, resulting from the increase in the number of local and foreign investors from 268 in 2001 to 326 in 2004. CDC's net income has likewise experienced a steady growth from P2.03 million in 2001 to P37.52 million in 2004.

Angeles and his team shaped Clark into becoming Asia's next best business and tourist destination, anchored on the aerotropolis concept of development with the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport (DMIA) as centerpiece.

Upon his retirement, Angeles will devote much of his time to the Movement for a Strong Philippines (MSP), a non-political, non-profit and non-partisan organization aimed at helping build a strong nation.

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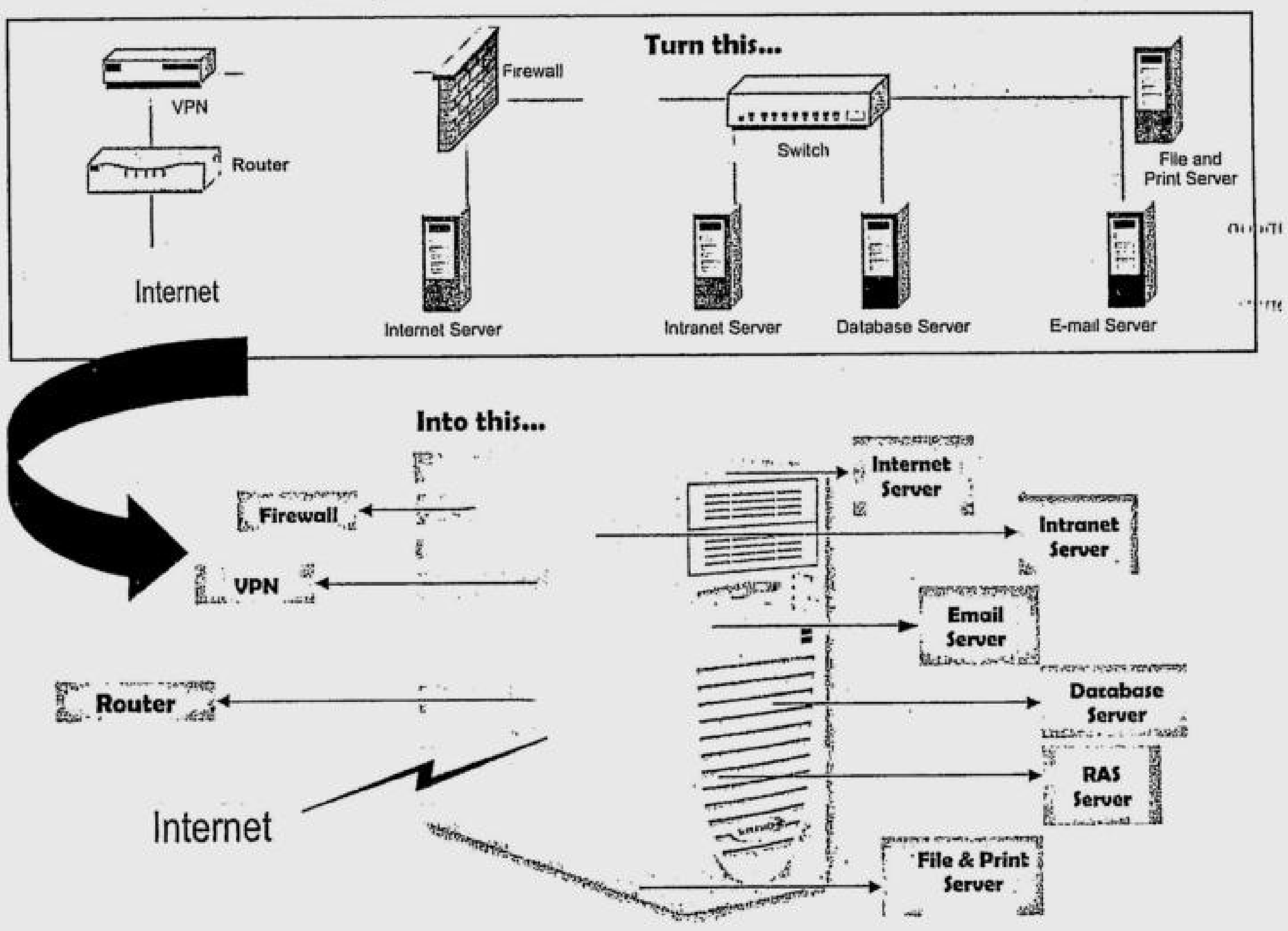

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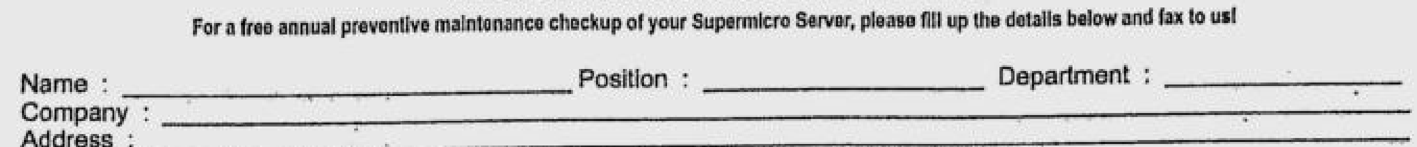

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Editor Aries Espinosa

DOT kicks off 'Meet and Assist' program in Cebu

THE DEPARTMENT of Tourism (DOT) will launch its pioneering "Meet and Assist" program at the Mactan International Airport in Cebu today.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano says the program, which was developed with the help of .Globe Handyphone, has resulted in the upgrading of a very important facet of tourist services in the country.

"Through this program, the DOT provides the services of efficient port entry officers who are able to communicate properly with non-English speaking tourists-Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans - at the airport," Durano explains.

He stresses that, "The essence of this project is to highlight the Filipino trait of being hospitable. After all, we Filipinos are known for our warmth, especially towards those who visit our country."

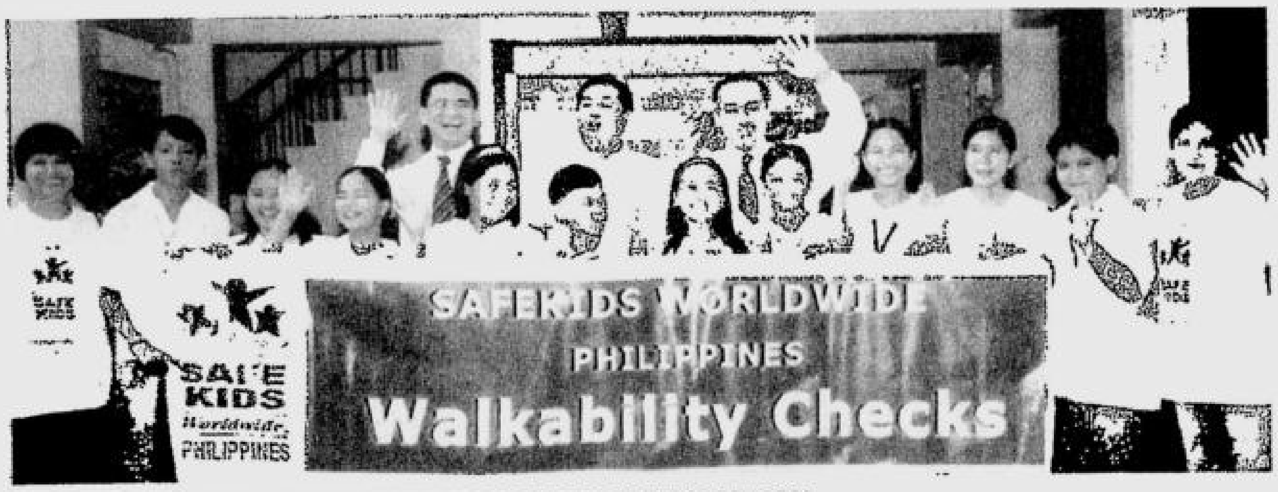
Interpreters were evaluated based on their language proficiency and their knowledge of the tourism industry in general. Qualified interpreters then underwent the DOT-initiated Mabuhay Host Program. Upon completion of the program, they were given a DOT Access Pass for a specified area of the airport.

Members of the "Meet and Assist" group are stationed within their respective information booths and are not allowed to approach or accompany passengers without prior endorsement from the Bureau of Immigration. Duty assignments depend on the frequency of flights, with interpreters being assigned on a rotation basis.

The program had its initial run at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia-1), where it was launched in December 2004. Since it began, the program has assisted over 2,000 passengers from China, Japan, and Korea.

According to the airport reception unit at Naia-1, queries covered a range of subjects. At the top of the list are requests for copies of the Philippine map, which are readily available, as well as questions regarding the country's various tourist destinations. Visitors also inquired about airport-related issues-such as filling out of immigration forms and location of key airport facilities-as well as other concerns, like foreign exchange and availability of mobile phone roaming services.

Durano says the DOT has plans to replicate the program at the Centennial Airport, thus extending the same quality service to foreign visitors who touch down at this port of entry.



FEDEX, SAFE KIDS, STUDENTS IN WALKABILITY CHECKS

FedEx Express (FedEx) and Safe Kids Philippines (SKF), together with volunteer barangay health workers and FedEx employees, recently conducted walkability checks in Pasay City during the 'Kalsadang Ligtas' celebrations held at the Padre Zamora Elementary School. Walkability checks are undertaken to gauge walking conditions for children on their way to school. The data gathered helps SFK and FedEx in the development of recommendations, implementation of programs and in proposing legislation that would help make school routes safer for children. Students who participated in the walkability checks are shown with (back row, from left) Dr. Rafael Consunji, Safe Kids director for Asia operations; Reuben Pangan, vice president for marketing of Airfreight 2100, the sole licensee of FedEx in the Philippines, and Samuel David, FedEx Philippines country manager.

New drug for high cholesterol launched

A NEW brand of popularly prescribed fenofibrate, a scientifically documented cholesterol-lowering drug, has been launched recently in the market.

The drug, which is indicated for dyslipidemia, has been shown to be especially good at lowering triglycerides and another form of bad cholesterol called very-low-density lipoprotein (VLDL). High levels of triglycerides, together with a high level of LDL and low level of high-density lipoprotein (HDL), forms the lipid triad which is a major cause of cardiovascular diseases.

"The control of atherogenic dyslipidemia in metabolic syndrome with fibric acid derivatives (fibrates) remains an important therapeutic strategy," said Dr. Ricardo Fernanado, founding president of the Institute for the Studies of Diabetes Foundation. "The pool of evidence shows that fibrate therapy reduces risk for coronary events, including fatal and non-fatal heart attack and stroke."

Dr. Rafael Castillo, chair of the Clinical Hypertension and Atherosclerosis Research on Therapies, Epidemiology and Risk Factors, explained that fenofibrate augments the production of HDL also known as good cholesterol. "HDL is the most powerful anti-oxidant agent in the body," he said. Low HDL cholesterol levels has been shown to independently correlate with CHD risk.

Fernando explained that fenofibrate is an effective activator of peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor (PPAR alpha). "PPAR alpha activators can lower the level of small dense LDL.

Fenofibrate belongs to the class of drugs known as fibric acid derivatives or fibrate. Although there are other drugs available in the market belonging to the same class, Fernando said they may not be as effective as fenofibrate.

"The selective PPAR alpha modulators of different PPAR alpha ligands promote distinct and very different effects," he said. "They will have certain things in common. But you generally cannot claim that the full effects of PPAR alpha stimulation can be made possible by another drug other than fenofibrate."

A clinical study such as the Diabetes Atherosclerosis Intervention Study (Dais) published in The Lancet has already shown that patients who took fenofibrate instead of placebo had a 40-percent decline in the progression of atherosclerosis. The results of Dais provide important data with significant implications for patients with cholesterol problems or dyslipidemia, particularly those with diabetes. The outcome of the trial indicates that fenofibrate therapy is an important therapeutic option as a primary or adjunctive therapy in the treatment of dyslipidemia.

The new brand of fenofibrate, Fibrafen 200M marketed by Patriot Pharmaceuticals, is a prescription drug and should only be used upon a doctor's advice.

ProductFILES

American comfort for the Filipino male

HANES must be one of the greatest American contributions to the world. That's because comfortable clothing is synonymous with Hanes. Though many American apparel brands specialize in fashions that let you move easily-from soft cotton underwear to sensible wardrobe items-only Hanes stands out worldwide.

The good news is that Filipino men can now enjoy the world-renowned quality of Hanes. When it comes to underwear, Filipino men will love Hanes Classics as much as their American counterparts. It offers a range of men's undershirts and briefs made of 100-percent pre-shrunk cotton and cottonblends that will keep them cool and comfy in tropical climate. The double stitching and taped neckbands make it durable enough to stand multiple washings.

Fancy wearing an undershirt? Choose from a variety of styles available depending on what you're used to wearing. The Sando is perfect under any kind of shirt. The Comfortlight Roundneck shirt made of lightweight fabric works under polo shirts. Use the Henley Shirt underneath your barongs on more formal occasions. On days men just want to wear a regular shirt, opt for the Roundneck and V-neck T-shirts

Get the comfortable fit and support you need with the line of Hanes Classics briefs. The Hi-Cut Bikini brief guarantees you ease of movement. Choose the Covered Garter Hipster brief if regular garter bands are bothersome. Then there's the trusty Hipster and Regular Brief for everyday use. Hanes Classics is available at Sara Lee Direct Selling Philippines and authorized Sara Lee dealers nationwide. For inquiries, call hotlines 810-5402 or e-mail customer.relations@saraleedirectselling.ph.

More PEP on page B14

COCOLIFE AIDS REAL, QUEZON VICTIMS

Cocolife, through the initiative of south Luzon area head Benedict Moro, donated assorted medicines to the hard-hit typhoon victims of Real, Quezon. Donations were coursed through the Conservative Baptist Association of the Philippines, Lucena chapter. Shown are, from left, Pastor Cery Realeza, Cocolife agency manager Tony Abracia, Cocolife area head Benedict Moro and branch operations assistant Otchie Latayan.

International SOS reiterates ITS commitment to service

INTERNATIONAL SOS widens its scope by rendering medical assistance and integrated services as the global company enters the millennium participating in the recent three major catastrophies.

There has been no letup in medical advice and assistance, which the clients of the two-decade organization could not have satisfactorily responded, from the Bali terrorist attack, to SARS and the recent tsunami disaster.

On the tsunami incident, SOS recorded more than 1,000 cases requesting various medical assistance and advice, locating missing persons, repartriation of mortal remains, which International SOS alarm centers have received in Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and India.

More than 70 staff members, a third of them medical professionals, were assigned round the clock to render services like evacuating 30 victims from affected areas, mostly tourists vacationing in Thailand. They were airlifted from Krabi, Surat Thani, Phuket and Colombo by SOS to seek medical treatment in Bangkok and Singapore. The youngest victim was a 7-year-old.

A temporary 24-hour alarm center in Phuket manned by three senior doctors was set up, while additional teams were deployed in Phang Nga province, which has been the worst hit area in Thailand.

In town for a speaking engagement at the first post-graduate course in Emergency Medicine was Dr. Rene de Jongh, medical director for assistance for South Asia, who expounded on the happenings of the tsunami aftermath.

De Jongh tackled the topic of the development and trends in aero-medical transport for emergency use. He revealed that International SOS has designed and developed unique equipment such as the Portable Medical Isolation Unit (PMIU) to transport individuals, with highly infectious diseases such as SARS.

Some 50 emergency physicians participated in the exercise held at the Asian Hospital and Medical Center in Alabang, Muntinlupa, with former Vice President Teofisto T. Guingona Jr as guest of honor. He was introduced by Serge Grynkewich 11, managing director of International SOS (Philippines) Inc.

Dr. Antonio Rivera, Asian Hospital medical director, gave the opening remarks while Dr. Johnny Sinon, medical director of SOS Philippines, briefed the participants and guests on Manila operations in terms of service awareness for individual and company programs.

The event was jointly organized by International SOS and Emergency Medicine Associates Inc (Emai).

A TOAST FOR BETTER BRANDY

Recent Manila visitor Don Beltran Domecq (right), brandy master of the prestigious House of Domecq in Jerez, Spain, is shown here with Allied Domecq Philippines managing director Neal Mcleod. Domecq, a great-grandson of Pedro Domecq Loustau, who in the 19th century created the first Spanish brandy Fundador, was in the country recently to conduct a series of brandy appreciation seminars. He is currently the director of commercial relations of the House of Domecq, which brings into the Philippines some the best brandies in the world-Fundador, Fundador Gold Reserve and Fundador Exclusivo. Fundador, the country's flagship brand, has been in the Philippines for more than a hundred years and is the country's number one imported spirit.

BITS Clips

Saint Francis of Assisi HS reunion

THE SAINT Francis of Assisi High School Batch 1980 in Allen, Northern Samar, will hold a reunion on March 26 and 27. For more details on this momentous event, call Beth Tancinco at +63919-5052017, or Melanie Floralde at 0920-8023336.

UP Delta Lambda Sigma sorority at 59

UP DELTA Lambda Sigma Sorority, in cooperation with Molave and Kamia Residence Hall and Red Bull, invites you to its 59th anniversary celebration, "Deltan Week 2005: Route 59". A fantastic treat awaits you as UP DLS presents Bamboo for a first-ever live performance in UP on Feb. 22, 7 p.m. at the UP Bahay ng Alumni. The concert will feature other bands like Slapshock, Aizo, The Brew, Chubibo, Giniling Festival, Ginseng, La Passionaria, Matilda, Sacramento and Slow Drive. In line with the organization's socio-civic goals, a medical-dental mission and tribute to maintenance will be held on Feb. 23. Lined up on Feb. 24 are a blood drive, "Grand Pakain, Libreng Ikot". For a grand finale, all Deltan generations will be reunited in an exciting badminton tournament and Vice Night on Feb. 26.

'Enervon AXN Xtreme'

THE PHILIPPINES' first extreme stunt TV production, the "Enervon AXN Xtreme", will see 10 brave Pinoys take on one thrilling dare after another. Exhibiting a gung-ho spirit, charisma and a strong desire to win during the qualifying rounds last December were Marc Leviste, model Geoff Rodriguez, Bruce Lee wannabe Gong Shu Xian, extreme adventure racer Fabian Mangahas and student of life Jimmy Hendra. Their gutsy female counterparts include Chinese educator Jolly Chinguanco, tattoo artist Monick Enriquez, fitness buff Cookie Lee, and customer care representative Anne Luverne Olandez and Fil-Am beauty queen Michelle Nocon. The public can vote for their favorite contestant at www.axn-asia.com when an online poll kicks off on Feb. 21.

Japanese sit-down comedy

THE EMBASSY of Japan and the Japan Foundation, Manila will present a unique traditional Japanese performance art called "Rakugo" on Feb. 21 and 22 at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium of the RCBC Plaza, Makati City. "Rakugo" is a comic monologue in which a storyteller creates an imaginary drama through episodic narration. Dating back to the 17th century, "Rakugo" stories usually reflect traditional concepts and values narrated humorously which remain meaningful and entertaining today. Rakugo, literally meaning a story with a witty ending, is a "sit-down" comedy where the performer sits atop a small mattress on stage throughout his performance. The Japan Foundation, Manila is also presenting a poster exhibit dubbed as "Discover Japan Through Contemporary Posters" in celebration of the Philippines-Japan Festival 2005 ongoing until Feb. 26, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., at the 4th Level of Edsa Shangri-La Plaza, Mandaluyong City. Call 551-7814 for inquiries.

Imaculata Academy of Malolos grand reunion

THE GRADUATES of Class '55 of the Holy Spirit Academy, formerly Imaculata Academy of Malolos, Bulacan, is holding their grand alumni homecoming Feb. 20 to 22. The three-day festivities include a tour of Tagaytay City and Intramuros in Manila today; and a dinner-dance party at Club Filipno on Feb. 22. All Golden Jubilarians of Imaculata Academy are enjoined to register and participate in the festivities. For more details, call Sylvia Garcia-Lazo at 372-4413, Zorayda Dimagiba-Manaligod at 373-5968 or Magdalena Cruz-Divino at 426-0531.

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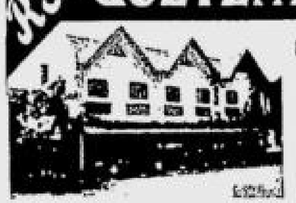

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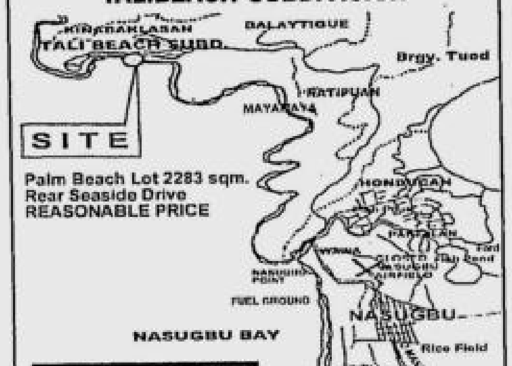

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ORIENTAL GARDEN CONDO 2BR, FF, Chino Roces Ave., Makati •0916-5063803•

PASIG

Ortigas Renaissance 3000 3br for Rent. Faces Antipolo 0928-2145239

QUEZON CITY

4rent 4BR 4TB w/Attic 2CGrg Bellevue Subd. nr. Grace H.S. 374-8832

TAGUIG

RENT TO OWN CONDO
Nr. Global City & D' Fort 50K-move in 17K/mo 09184131377

APARTMENT

QUEZON CITY

BNEW studio PROJ.2 4342604 / 0919-2876641

KANLAON 2BR 7315908

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

ROOM & BOARD

BF P'QUE P200I 8275345

Chin Hosptal Mla 7118679

•FURNISH PASAY 8872865•

Rm / Bedspace Male Aircon Mktl 8709999 / 09204595619

BEDSPACE

Male Pasay P1.5 5500254

BUSINESS RENTAL

MAKATI nr BUENDIA PTAMO 62/129/148/185/M² 1st class 8903461 loc 34 or 19 ofc hrs

LOAN & MORTGAGE

BUSINES DOCTOR 524-3197

OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT

Francisco Gold Bldg I 73.60m² 12T All-In 4121825; 09177914366

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE OR RENT

CONDO/TWHSE/ FOR SALE/RENT

PACIFIC PLAZA SPECIALIST Furn / Unfurn 0918-9392979

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

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Honda Civic VTIS 2001 A/T New Tires & Mags (Momo), 450T Call Mr. Edozie 427-8915 • 0915-5639302

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'96 MB100 A1cond P330th 0920-9047636 / 724-6922

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'04 Adventure GLS Sport 550T Diesel 671-1477 / 82

'05 ADV GLX DSL P135T D/P OR P10,568 MO - 09176206816

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Big Scooter '98Honda Fusion 0920-9047636 / 7246922

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CARS FOR RENT

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CAR LOAN

1.5% Car Loan 5344441

1.5% CARLOAN 373-6519

1.5% CARLOAN 788-0361

1.5% Easy Car Loan 3748765

1.5% Easy Car Loan 4112547/48

1.5% Easy Carloan 7815352/55

1.5% Fast Car Loan 6560140

1.5% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

1.5% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

•1HR Fast Car Loan 7125202•

2% w/o taking car 7880183-84

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/oTaking Car 8966630/33

2% w/oTaking Car 3732081/82

2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

2% w/out taking car 5315577

2% w/out taking car 6567685

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL

PLYBOARD.18mm P680-PLYWOOD marine 5mm P320-Tel. 813-1841; 813-1555

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

YAMAHA GRAND & UPRIGHT ELITE PIANO CENTER Almost New:TERMS-7213124

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Dog Trainer 0919-2050952

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

NOTICE of loss of OR# A-105966 of Tricom Dynamics Inc. The said OR is invalid. (PDI - February 21, 2005)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Region V, Legazpi City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID FOR THE SECURITY SERVICES FOR NFA REGION V

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY Region V, Legazpi City invites all interested private security agencies to register, apply for eligibility and to bid for the provisions of Security Services in the different installations of the NFA in the region. The service contract to be bid shall be divided into two (2) lots as follows:

LOT	AREA COVERED	NO. OF GUARDS	BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (Php)
1	Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur and Catanduanes	38	4,460,863.68
2	Albay, Sorsogon and Masbate	46	5,412,605.88

The source of the budget for the contract shall be the corporate operating budget of the agency.

Registration/eligibility/bid documents will be available for issuance at RBAC Secretariat, NFA Legazpi City upon payment of a non-refundable/non-transferrable registration fee of P1,000.00.

Only those who have been pre-qualified by the RBAC and who have paid an additional non-refundable bidding fee per lot of P3,000.00 shall be allowed to participate in the Pre-Bidding Conference and the Bidding Proper.

The schedule of bidding activities are as follows:

ACTIVITIES	DATE	TIME	VENUE
Issuance of application forms for registration	February 18 to March 7, 2005	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	NFA Regional Office, Legazpi City
Deadline for submission of Application for registration with required documents	March 18, 2005	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	NFA Regional Office Legazpi City
Issuance of Certificate of Registration and Application for Eligibility to bid.	March 28-29,2005	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	NFA Regional Office Legazpi City
Pre-Bidding Conference	April 1, 2005	10:00 AM	Conference Room, NFA R.O., Legazpi City
Submission and Opening of Bids	April 15, 2005	10:00 AM	Conference Room, NFA R.O. Legazpi City

A Special Power of Attorney is required before the issuance of the documents for authorized representative in behalf of the bidder.

Other inquiries may be addressed to the RBAC Secretariat, NFA Region V, Legazpi City with telephone numbers (052) 480-7015/ 480-7933.

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS THEREOF, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITIES OR DEFECTS FOUND THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS OR AWARD TO ANY CONTRACTOR WHOSE BID IS CONCERNED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE NFA OR TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) JOSE B. GUEVARA
RBAC Chairman

(PDI - Feb. 21 & 28, 2005)

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Spouses MARCOS VILLEGAS and SEVERA VILLEGAS has been adjudicated before Notary Public Benjamin Bau,l Jr. of Quezon City per Doc No.65 Page No.13 Book No.I Series of 2005
(PDI Feb.21,28&Mar7,2005)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late PATRICIA MOLINYAWE has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs before Notary Public Dencio B. Bargas as per Doc 224, Page 46, Book II, Series of 2005.
(PDI - February 21, 28 & March 7, 2005.)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late PUREZA BORROMEO was extrajudicially settled among her heirs as per Doc. No. 194; page No. 34; Book No. 28; Series of 2004 under notary public Atty. Edgardo Y. Paagas of Cagayan de Oro City
(PDI-Feb 21, 28 & March 7, 2005)

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CAREGIVER T4043528

SALES MKTG STF 09178451373

OFFICE SPACE FOR LEASE

Jacinta Bldg. 2 (formerly 3M House)
EDSA, Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati City

Ground Floor	385 sq.m.
Second Floor	575 sq.m.
Third Floor	454 sq.m.
Fourth Floor	454 sq.m.
Sixth Floor	454 sq.m.

Please call Tel. No. 882-1258/882-1213

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Notice is hereby given that **Futsu International Corporation**, a corporation duly organized and existing under the law of the Republic of the Philippines with principal office and place of business at Ngilay Road, Tambler, General Santos City.

By virtue of a resolution duly approved unanimously by its Board of Director, January 13, 2005 decided to dissolve its term of existence on February 28, 2005.

Any person, natural or juridical who may have money, claims or otherwise against said corporation may present or file the same with the secretary of the corporation within the three (3) weeks from the date of the publication.

Let this notice be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the whole country for the three (3) consecutive weeks prior to its dissolution.

(Sgd.) Lin-Chen, Jen-Shiu
President

(PDI-Feb.9, 15 & 21, 2005)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE/FEMALE

Dom.helper, dressmaker, all around beautician 5224435 0920-6262141

Graphic Designer / Artist for Garments P500/day Call Tel. 410-7087

LORMA MEDICAL CENTER
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Needs: RN's, MRI Technicians 10-15 Medical Interns for 2005-06. Respiratory Therapists. Admitting Clerk
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PERSONAL

PERSONAL

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

Oh, St. Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God. I place in you all my interest and desires. Oh, St. Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession, and obtain for me from your divine son all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So that, having engaged here below your heavenly power, I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of fathers. Oh, St. Joseph, I never weary contemplating you, and Jesus asleep in your arms; I dare not approach while He reposes near your heart. Press Him in my name and kiss His fine head for me and ask Him to return the Kiss when I draw my dying breath St. Joseph, Patron of departing souls - Pray for me.

This prayer was found in the fiftieth year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In 1505 it was sent from the Pope to Emperor Charles when he was going into battle. Whoever shall read this prayer or hear it or keep it about themselves shall never die a sudden death, or be drowned, nor shall poison take effect on them, neither shall they fall into the hands of the enemy or shall be burned in any fire or shall be overpowered in battle.

Say for nine mornings for anything you may desire. It has never been known to fail so be sure you really want what you ask.

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SECURITY BANK

PUBLIC AUCTION

MARCH 10, 2005 • THURSDAY • 3:00 PM
21/F, Security Bank Centre, Ayala Ave., Makati City
SHOW MONEY: PhP 25,000 CASH or MC

KALOOKAN

LOT 1 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 720 sqm.
Lot 3439, Gen. Mascardo Bagong Barrio
Minimum Bid Price: 7,000,000

LOT 2 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 474 sqm.
Floor Area: various
Lot 6, Blk. 4, Morning Glory cor. Easter Lily St., BF Homes Subd., Phase III, Deparo
Minimum Bid Price: 1,370,000

LAS PINAS

LOT 3 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 971 sqm.
L62-A, B1, Brgy. Aldana, Padre Sierra Avenue (Quirino Ave.), National Rd., Pulang Lupa
Minimum Bid Price: 13,458,060

LOT 4 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 6,463 sqm.
Lot 61-B, B-1, B-2, B-3, B-4 & L 60, B 1, Padre Sierra Ave (Quirino Ave.) Natl. Rd. Pulang Lupa
Minimum Bid Price: 72,740,450

MAKATI CITY

CONDO-COMML
27/F Pacific Star Bldg., G. Puyat Ave cor Makati Ave

LOT 5 - Unit 2705
Floor Area: 268.22 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 11,332,295

LOT 6 - Unit 2706,
Floor Area: 262.6 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 11,094,850

MALABON

LOT 7 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 786 sqm.
Floor Area: 555.7 sqm.
No. 1 Dahlia corner White Lily Street, Araneta Village, Malabon
Minimum Bid Price: 5,304,089

MUNTINLUPA CITY

LOT 8 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 319 sqm.
Lot 26, Block 3-E, Orange St., Ruby Park, Victoria Homes, Tunasan
Minimum Bid Price: 638,000

PARANAQUE CITY

LOT 9 - CONDO-RESDL
Floor Area: 164.62
Unit 1703, Pacific Coast Condo Project, Coastal Road, Tambo
Minimum Bid Price: 3,000,000

LOT 10 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 749 sqm.
Lot 1, Abalone St., Jaloville Subd., Brgy. San Dionisio
Minimum Bid Price: 3,670,100

PASIG CITY

LOT 11 - CONDO-RESDL
Floor Area: 167.06 sqm.
Unit 804 Pearl Plaza Condo., Pearl Drive, Origas Centre
Minimum Bid Price: 4,600,000

QUEZON CITY

LOT 12 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 273 sqm.
Floor Area: 285 sqm.
No. 40 Caragay St., San Francisco Del Monte
Minimum Bid Price: 2,590,000

LOT 13 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 400 sqm.
Floor Area: various
No. 28 Pisces St., Carmel V Subd., Tandang Sora
Minimum Bid Price: 4,830,000

LOT 14 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 381 sqm.
Floor Area: 176 sqm.
No. 45 East Riverside St., San Francisco Del Monte
Minimum Bid Price: 2,920,000

LOT 15 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,125 sqm.
Floor Area: various
#191 Kaipunan Ave. Quirino Dist
Minimum Bid Price: 28,125,000

VALENZUELA CITY

LOT 16 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,728 sqm.
Floor Area: 100 sqm.
Lot 6-B-4-B-2, Coloong Road I, Brgy. Coloong
Minimum Bid Price: 2,550,000

LOT 17 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 9,037 sqm.
No. 3 San Andres Canumay
Minimum Bid Price: 20,250,000

RIZAL

LOT 18 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 400 sqm.
Lot 12, Blk. 21, Road Lot 9-A, Village East Executive Homes, Barrio San Isidro, Angono
Minimum Bid Price: 420,000

LOT ONLY
Cottonwood Heights, Bo. San Isidro, Antipolo

LOT 19 - B5/L3 Teakwood
Lot Area: 287 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 861,000

LOT 20 - B5/L20 Rosewood St
Lot Area: 415 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 1,245,000

LOT 21 - B4/L20 Teakwood cor. Oakwood St
Lot Area: 274 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 959,000

LOT ONLY
Metro View Ridge Estates Subd., Antipolo

LOT 22 - Block 5/Lot 16
Lot Area: 360 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 1,663,200

LOT 23 - Block 6/Lot 12
Lot Area: 390 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 1,801,800

LOT 24 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 432 sqm.
Lot 14, Blk. 32, Forest Hills Residential Estate and Golf & Country Club, Phase I, Bo. San Isidro, Antipolo
Minimum Bid Price: 1,080,000

LOT 25 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 415 sqm.
Lot 15, Blk. 32, Forest Hills Residential Estate and Golf & Country Club, Phase I, Bo. San Isidro, Antipolo
Minimum Bid Price: 1,038,000

LOT 26 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 13,174 sqm.
Floor Area: 7,521.41 sqm.
Lot 1-A Sto. Domingo, Cainta, Rizal
Minimum Bid Price: 48,250,000

LOT 27 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 850 sqm.
Km. 23, Origas Ave. Ext., San Isidro, Taytay
Minimum Bid Price: 8,500,000

BATANGAS

LOT 28 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 286 sqm.
Floor Area: 141.5 sqm.
Lot 7, Blk. 1, Lamar St., Lamar Vil., Bo. Sabang, Lipa
Minimum Bid Price: 967,000

LOT 29 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 748 sqm.
Lot 1, Blk. 3, Palm Ridge Drive cor. Raffia Palm St., Palm Ridge Pointee, Ph. 1, Bo. Balas, Talisay
Minimum Bid Price: 1,987,000

LOT 30 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 371 sqm.
Lot 21, Blk. 19, Palmridge Pointee Subd., Talisay
Minimum Bid Price: 1,038,800

LOT 31 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 19,195 sqm.
Lot 10252-B-3-A, Lot 10258-A-3 & Lot 10258-A-4, Int. J. P. Laurel Provincial Road (Talisay-Tanauan Road), Km. 71, Bo. Talaga, Tanauan
Minimum Bid Price: 7,200,000

BULACAN

LOT 32 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 24,525 sqm.
Floor Area: 121 sqm.
Bo. Tiaong, Guiguinto
Minimum Bid Price: 7,231,000

LOT 33 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 10,115 sqm.
Floor Area: various
No. 0736 Barangay Road, Bo. Mulawin, Baliuag
Minimum Bid Price: 4,300,000

LOT 34 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 1,997 sqm.
Lot 5210-B-1, Bo. Malandang Sili, Pandi, Bulacan (interior lot)
Minimum Bid Price: 998,500

LOT 35 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 4,254 sqm.
Lot 2934-A, Lot 1083-D & Lot 1079-D-1, Mabini St., Bo. Sabang, Baliuag
Minimum Bid Price: 3,143,009

LOT 36 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 67,706 sqm.
Lot 1268 & Lot 840, Along Sta. Maria-SJDM, Prov'l. Rd. Bo. Dulong Bayan, SJDM, Bulacan
Minimum Bid Price: 22,970,000

LOT 37 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 10,000 sqm.
Lot 2-C, Bo. Perez & Bahay Pare, Meycauayan
Minimum Bid Price: 27,000,000

LOT 38 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 12,870 sqm.
Lot 2602-B, Bo. Masusu, Pandi
Minimum Bid Price: 2,574,000

CAVITE

LOT 39 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 1,100 sqm.
Gov. Ferrer Ave., Brgy. Tejero, Rosario (beside SBC-Rosario Branch)
Minimum Bid Price: 6,700,000

LOT ONLY
Southwood Villas, Salitran, Dasmarinas

LOT 40 - Lot 11 / Blk 3
Lot Area: 176 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 440,000

LOT 41 - Lot 12 / Blk 3
Lot Area: 206 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 515,000

LOT ONLY
Metro Gate Subdivision, Trece Martirez City

LOT 42 - Block 212/Lot 14
Lot Area: 126 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 291,060

LOT 43 - Block 212/Lot 17
Lot Area: 120 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 277,200

LOT 44 - Block 212/Lot 18
Lot Area: 120 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 277,200

LOT 45 - Block 212/Lot 20
Lot Area: 120 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 277,200

LOT 46 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 625 sqm.
Lot 13 & 15, Blk. 31, Brgy. Quintana, Trece Martirez City
Minimum Bid Price: 875,000

LOT ONLY
Eagleridge Golf and Residential Estate, Amadeo Rd., Gen. Trias

LOT 47 - L-42 B-107 (inner lot), Birmingham St.
Lot Area: 407 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 854,700

LOT 48 - L-45 B-107 (inner lot), Birmingham St
Lot Area: 384 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 806,400

LOT 49 - L-44 B-107 (inner lot), Birmingham St.
Lot Area: 392 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 823,200

LOT 50 - L-34 B-107 (inner lot), Birmingham St.
Lot Area: 470 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 987,000

LOT 51 - L-36 B-107 (inner lot), Birmingham St
Lot Area: 454 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 953,400

LOT 52 - L-20 B-59 (fairway lot w/ share), Oxford St.
Lot Area: 654 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 1,769,600

LOT 53 - L-22 B-59 (fairway lot w/ share), Woodstock St
Lot Area: 550 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 1,410,000

LOT 54 - L-30 B-59 (fairway lot w/ share), Oxford St
Lot Area: 560 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 1,544,000

LOT ONLY
Guardarrama Street, Allamira Subd., Puerto Azul, Brgy. Sapang, Ternate

LOT 55 - Lot 10 Blk. 6
Lot Area: 300 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 750,000

LOT 56 - Lot 11, Blk 6
Lot Area: 300 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 750,000

LOT 57 - Lot 12 Blk 6
Lot Area: 300 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 750,000

LOT 58 - LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 300 sqm.
Lot 6, Blk. 7, Lincoln St., PH I, The Royale Tagaytay Estate, Alfonso
Minimum Bid Price: 1,386,000

LAGUNA

LOT 59 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 324 sqm.
Floor Area: 297 sqm.
No. 8 Ortega St., San Vicente, San Pedro
Minimum Bid Price: 1,190,000

LOT 60 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 240 sqm.
Floor Area: 210 sqm.
#157 Country Dr. St., Country Homes Subd., Barrio Soro-Soro, Biñan
Minimum Bid Price: 1,180,000

LOT ONLY
Southlake Subd., Bo. Bukal, Calamba

LOT 61 - Lot 8, Blk 3
Lot Area: 240 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 480,000

LOT 62 - Lot 3, Blk 5
Lot Area: 240 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 480,000

LOT 63 - Lot 1, Blk 10
Lot Area: 418 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 820,000

LOT 64 - Lot 3, Blk 10
Lot Area: 300 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 590,000

LOT 65 - Lot 5, Blk 10
Lot Area: 240 sqm.
Minimum Bid Price: 472,000

BAGUIO CITY

LOT 66 - CONDO-RESDL
Floor Area: 115.87 sq. m.
Unit 21-D, Richgate Square II Condominium, Loblolly Pine corner Catmon Cupang, Brgy. Camp 7
Minimum Bid Price: 3,200,000

CBRE
CB RICHARD ELLIS
AUCTION MANAGER

Call CBRE for more information (02) 759.2335 or 752.2580
or TEXT US and we will CALL you
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PLEASE CONFIRM ATTENDANCE TO ENSURE SEATS.

ALL PROPERTIES FOR SALE ARE ON AN "AS IS WHERE IS" BASIS.
PROPERTIES AND PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

ASSET DISPOSAL PROJECT
NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID

"AS-IS-WHERE-IS"
FOR THE SALE OF NPC TUGBOAT NO. 2 & 3
DATE OF BIDDING: March 10, 2005

The National Power Corporation will receive sealed bids on an "AS-IS-WHERE-IS" basis for the assets described below

ITEM DESCRIPTION		Min. Bid Price
LOT 1: One (1) unit Unused Tugboat, 3000 PS (Tugboat No. 3)		**P34,816,500.00**
Length (Overall, without rubber fender-sheal)	33.30 meter (approx.)	
Breadth (molded)	9.20 meter	
Depth (molded)	3.90 meter	
Designed Load Draught (molded)	2.90 meter	
Gross Tonnage (international)	310.00 tons	
Loading Capacity	80.00 tons (approx.)	
MAIN DIESEL ENGINES		
Make	Mitsubishi	
No. of Units	2 units	
No. of Cylinder	6 cylinders	
Max. Continuous Output	1500 PS @ 1150 rpm	
Normal Output	1350 PS @ 1110 rpm	
Acquired	1998	
Location	Naga, Cebu	
LOT 2: One (1) unit Tugboat (Tugboat No. 2)		**P34,896,105.00**
Length (Overall)	30.40 meters	
Beam (Molded)	7.40 meters	
Draft Maximum	2.30 meters	
Gross Tonnage	180 tons	
Main Diesel Engine, 2 Units	Detroit 16V-92N 626 PS @ 1,800 RPM	
Generator Engine, 2 Units	Detroit, Type 4-71N 70KW @ 1,800 RPM	
Rated Output	1,200 HP	
Manufacturer	President Marine	
Date Manufactured	1994	
Location	Naga, Cebu	

Interested eligible bidders may obtain bidding documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (PhP 5,000.00) at the Materials Management Department office, Ground Floor, Building No. 1, National Power Corporation, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders' representatives at 10:00 AM on March 10, 2005 at the NPC Solarium, NPC Head Office. Bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Bond (Cash or Manager's Check only) of not less than ten percent (10%) of the total amount of bid. The Power Sector Asset and Liabilities Management (PSALM) Corporation have concurred with the bidding process and clearance for the disposal was duly approved.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any required informality, and to accept such bids that is more advantageous to the Government.

Issuance of bidding documents is on February 17, 2005 to March 7, 2005. A Pre-bid conference will be conducted at 2:00 PM on March 7, 2005 at the Pahiyas Room, NPC Solarium, NPC Head Office. Additional information may be obtained from Asset Disposal Project office at telephone nos. 922-3970, and 921-3541 loc. 5582, or e-mail us at *lcarabelo@napocor.gov.ph*

(Sgd.) LEVI C. ARABELO
Chairman, Task Force for the Disposal of Tugboats 2 & 3

Note: This advertisement is also posted in our website. htpp://www.napocor.gov.ph

(PDI - Feb 18, 19 & 21, 2005)

ASSET DISPOSAL PROJECT
NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID

"AS-IS-WHERE-IS"
FUEL TANK BARGE "T-228"
DATE OF BIDDING: 10:00 AM / MARCH 10, 2005

The National Power Corporation will receive sealed bids on an "AS-IS-WHERE-IS" basis for the sale of the asset described below:

ITEM / DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	MINIMUM BID PRICE
Lot 1 - One (1) Unit, FUEL BARGE (Non-propelled), "T-228" Material of Hull : Steel Length Overall (LOA) : 82.00 meters Length between Perpendiculars (LWL) : 81.26 meters Breadth (Molded) : 25.26 meters Number of Deck : Single Gross Tonnage (Approx) : 2,610 tons Net Tonnage (Approx) : 2,591 tons Fuel Barge Capacity : 40,000 barrels Date Launched : July 17, 1993 Shipbuilder Hull No. : 63	Batangas Coal-Fired Thermal Power Plant, Calaca, Batangas	P26,968,500.00

Interested eligible bidders may obtain bidding documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Two Thousand Pesos (PhP2,000.00)** at the Materials Management Department office, Ground Floor, Building No. 1, National Power Corporation, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

Bids will be opened in the presence of bidder's representatives at **10:00 a.m. on March 10, 2005** at the Kañao Room, NPC Solarium, NPC Head Office. Bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Bond (Cash or Manager's Check only) of not less than **ten percent (10%)** of the total amount of bid. The Power Sector Asset and Liabilities Management (PSALM) Corporation have concurred with the bidding process and clearance for the disposal was duly approved.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any informality, and to accept such bids as may be deemed most advantageous to the Government.

Issuance of bidding documents is on **February 17, 2005 to March 7, 2005.** A Pre-bid conference will be conducted at 2:00 p.m. on March 7, 2005 at the Pahiyas Room, NPC Solarium, NPC Head Office. For additional information, please call Asset Disposal Project at telephone nos. 922-3970, and 921-3541 loc. 5582, or e-mail us at lcarabelo@napocor.gov.ph.

(Sgd.) LEVI C. ARABELO
Chairman, Task Force on the Disposal of Fuel Barge

Note: This advertisement is also posted on our website: htpp://www.napocor.gov.ph

(PDI - Feb. 18, 19 & 21, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Bukidnon
MUNICIPALITY OF DANGCAGAN
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (BAC)

DAR-ADB ARCP

INVITATION TO BID

The Government of the Philippines through the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) has received a loan from Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of Agrarian Reform Community Project (ARCP) and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the following contract located at Barangay Miaray, Municipality of Dangcagan, Province of Bukidnon for which this Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid is issued.

The Local Government of Dangcagan, Province of Bukidnon as implementing partner of DAR for ARCP invites contractor's classified and registered with the Philippine Contractor's Accreditation Board (PCAB) as MEDIUM "A" to apply for eligibility and bid for the Rehabilitation of 3.22 kms. Jct. Provincial Rd. – Miaray – Fatima – Pulangui Road.

Project Duration	150 Calendar Days
Approved Budget Cost	Php 5,903,567.16
Deadline of the Submission of Letter of Intent and Eligibility Requirements	March 7, 2005
Deadline of Submission of Bids	April 2, 2005 @ 9:00 A.M. @ BAC Secretariat Office Dangcagan Municipal Hall
Opening of Bids	April 20, 2005 @ 10:00 A.M. Conference Room Dangcagan Municipal Hall

DESCRIPTION OF WORK

Item No.	Scope of Works	Quantity	Unit
100	Clearing & Grubbing	23,200	Sq.m.
102	Common Excavation	14,900	Cu.m.
103	Structure Excavation	370	Cu.m.
104 (1)	Embankment	9,600	Cu.m.
104 (2)	Selected Fill	3,110	Cu.m.
201	Aggregate Base Course	2,000	Cu.m.
500-1A	RCPC – 0.910 Diameter	155	L.M.
505	Stone Masonry	307	Cu.m.

Minimum Equipment Required

Bulldozer (1 unit)-owned; Road Grader (1 unit)- owned; Road Roller (1 unit)-owned; Water Truck (1 unit)- owned or lease; Backhoe (1 unit)-owned or lease. Dump Truck (4 units)-owned

A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by the interested bidders at the BAC Secretariat Office of the Municipality of Dangcagan, Province of Bukidnon starting March 1, 2005 from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P5,000.00 for each set. Pre-bid conference will be held in the same address on April 8, 2005 at 9:00 A.M.

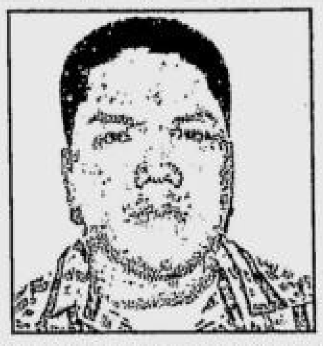
A Bid Security is required in a form of GSIS Surety Bond equivalent to 2 ½ of the Approved Budget of the Contract or in form of Cash, Certified Check, Manager's Check, Cashier's Check in an amount equivalent to 1% of the Approved Budget of the Contract.

Unless otherwise indicated in the Instruction to bidders or other bidding and contract documents, all particulars relative to the procurement and contract implementation shall be governed by RA 9184 and its IRR-A.

The LGU-BAC of Dangcagan, Province of Bukidnon reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any direct or formality, assume no obligation whatsoever to compensate indemnity to the contractor/bidder for any expenses that they may incur in the preparation of bid and to accept the lowest, evaluated, responsive and complying bid.

(Sgd.) LEONARDO D. DUROG
BAC Chairman

(PDI – Feb. 14 & 21, 2005)



This is to inform the public that **MR. PEPITO PANAGUITON** whose picture appears above is no longer connected with EXCORE INC. effective February 15, 2005.

Any transaction entered into or made through him for the company shall not be honored.

(PDI – February 21, 2005)

NOTICE OF LIQUIDATION

of FINASIA REALTY & DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
(formerly Finasia Investments and Finance Corporation)

Notice is hereby given that the Securities and Exchange Commission in its order dated June 22, 2004 has ordered the liquidation of **FINASIA REALTY & DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (formerly FINASIA INVESTMENTS AND FINANCE CORPORATION)** and appointed Atty. Marcial O.T Balgos, on January 25, 2005 as its liquidator.

Accordingly, all claimants and/or creditors of the said corporation are requested to submit verified statements of their claims together with their supporting documents to the liquidator at BALGOS & PEREZ, 1009 West Tektite Tower, Exchange Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City on or before thirty (30) days from date hereof.

All persons indebted or obligated to the corporation are enjoined to make their payments to the liquidator at Balgos & Perez, 1009 West Tektite Tower, Exchange Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City (Tel. Nos. 637-1477, 637-0376, 636-7526 & 638-8732) on or before the due dates of the instruments covering the same.

Pasig City, February 18, 2005.

MARCIAL O.T. BALGOS
Liquidator

(PDI – Feb. 21, 2005)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the public that **MS. SONIA A. DELOS SANTOS,** whose picture appears above, is no longer connected with ZEPEDA AGRO-INDUSTRIAL CORPORATION effective January 27, 2005.

Any transaction entered into or made through her shall not be honored by ZEPEDA AGRO-INDUSTRIAL CORPORATION.

(PDI- February 21, 2005)

NOTICE

We would like to inform the public that Job Offers Inc. with business address at 11th Floor Burgundy Corporate Tower, 252 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City has applied for issuance of POEA license with the following staff:

ATTY. JOSE A. FABIA –	Chairman of the Board OIC, Government Relations Department
CRISPINA S. FABIA –	President/CEO
MILAGROS S. VILLAFLOR –	Corporate Secretary Board Member
JOANNE FATIMA S. FABIA –	Corporate Treasurer Manager, Client Relations and Marketing Dept.
MATRYN RHOSE A. MONGE –	Administrative Officer
EDNA S. DE GUZMAN –	Board Member

- The Management

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Aspac honors outstanding Ateneo College teachers

THE ATENEO Schools Parents Council (ASPAC) will honor winners of the annual search for the Most Outstanding Teachers during ceremonies set on Feb. 18 at 5 p.m. at the Escaler Hall of the Science Education Complex, Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU). After a rigorous search process, the panel of judges voted **Dr. Norman F. Quimpo**, professor and former head of the math department of the School of Science and Engineering as Outstanding Senior Teacher (OST). He is joined by **Darwin D. Yu**, assistant professor of the department of finance and accounting of the John Gokongwei School of Management who was named Outstanding Junior Teacher (OJT). **Walfredo P. Belen**, lecturer from the economics department of the School of Social Sciences was cited as Outstanding Part-Time Teacher (OPTT). The three new winners join an elite roster of 28 other former outstanding teachers from the Loyola Schools. Each of the winner will receive a cash incentive of P 50,000, P 35,000, and P 15,000, for the senior, junior and part-time awardees, respectively, together with a especially designed glass trophy by internationally acclaimed artist Ramon Orlina, a plaque of recognition, and a set of *Illustrated History of the World Encyclopedia*

NFA to distribute rice to pupil-beneficiaries of FFSP

THE NATIONAL Food Authority (NFA) has targeted to distribute a total of 93,193 bags of government rice to 49,049 pupil-beneficiaries of the Food For School Program (FFSP) of the government. According to NFA administrator Gregorio Y. Tan, Jr., the food agency has already distributed some 47,663 bags of NFA rice to identified pupil-beneficiaries of the FFSP. The rice distributed, Tan said, registered 51 percent accomplishment of the total volume targeted for distribution to the pupil-beneficiaries for the whole duration of the program's implementation. The NFA chief also said that the total volume to be distributed to the FFSP beneficiaries is based on the list of the total number of pupils enlisted by the DepEd. The Food For School Program rice distribution to school children is implemented as a result of a memorandum of agreement signed by the NFA and DepEd. The Food For School Program motivates the pupils to regularly go to school to receive their NFA rice allocation every after the school day's session.

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"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
— 2 Corinthians 5:8

CARMEN de GUIA ALCID

Born on November 9, 1928
Died peacefully in Federal Way, Washington
on February 16, 2005 at 5:45 in the evening.

She is survived by her sister, **Consuelo "Choling" Ramoso**; children: **Lourdes & Danny Javilinar, Tet, Chu-Chu, Boy & Penny, Rene & Veronica, Andy & Grace, Ariel, Tina & Mandy Pedagat**; grandchildren: **Weng & Willy, JP, Eugene, Jan, Ralph, Regina & Alan, Racquel & Gerald, Jean, Abby, Angelo, Jesse, Olivia, Annmarie, Kathryn, Chloe, Lenny, Ray, Monika**; great-grandchildren: **Jacob, Jarren, Micah** and **Marco**.

Her remains will be cremated in Kent, Washington on Monday, February 21, 2005 but will be buried in Manila at a later date.

"The Lord has called home our beloved Daddy"

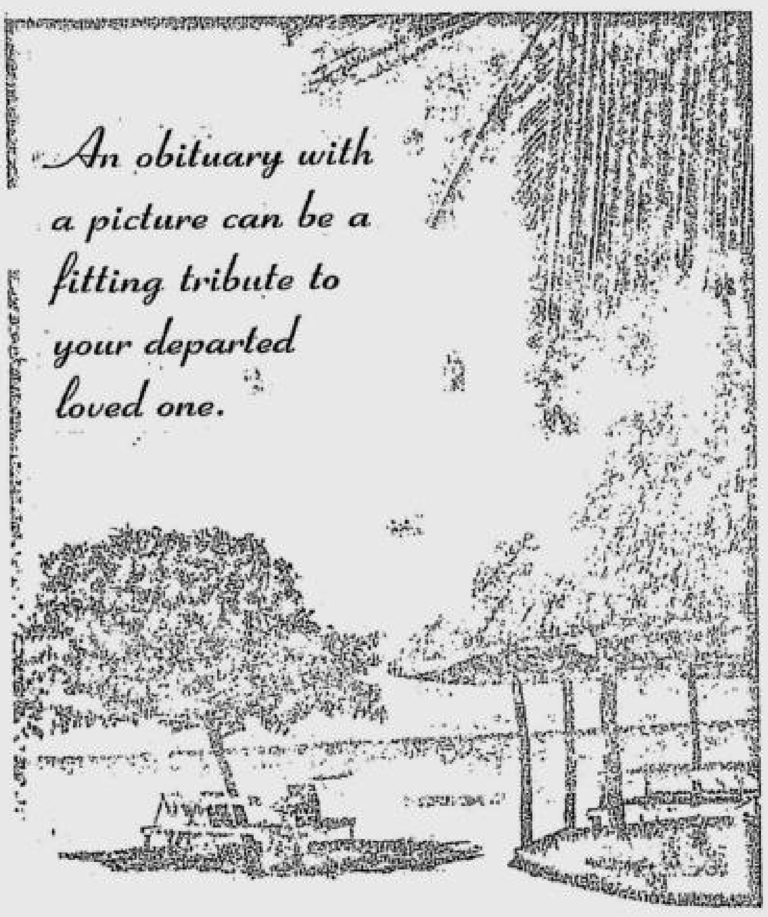
ENGR. EDILBERTO S. FABILA, SR.

Assistant Regional Director
DPWH – Region VI

His loving wife, **Dr. Melba Holer-Fabila**; children **Atty. Edilberto Jr.**, **Edmely** & **Capt. Gilbert Manio**, and **Melendie**; grandchildren **Eunice** & **Gillianne Manio**; brothers, sisters-in-law, relatives and friends request you to join them in celebrating his coming to the Lord.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Inc., 12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City, to be flown to San Jose de Buenavista, Antique on 22 February 2005.

Interment will be on 28 February 2005 at 9:00 am at San Jose Cemetery, San Jose de Buenavista, Antique.



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In Loving Remembrance of
1st Death Anniversary

EDUARDO G. FABIAN

of Tarlac City & Las Piñas City
January 15, 1926 – February 22, 2004

Mass will be offered at
the following Churches.

St. Joachim Catholic Church *Hayward, CA. USA*	8:30 AM
Our Lady of Ransom *Niles, IL. USA*	8:15 AM
Association of the Miraculous Medal *Perryville, MO. USA*	8:30 AM
Sto. Rosario Catholic Church *Cebu City*	8:30 AM
San Sebastian Cathedral *Tarlac City*	3:00 PM
Presentation of the Child Jesus Parish *BF Homes, Parañaque City*	7:00 PM

1ST Lt ZOSIMO PINAT ARRIOLA

Died on February 17, 2005 at the age of 63.

His loving wife, **Ladelle Arriola**
Children: **Joy, Janette, Jennifer** and **Jason**
Children-in-law, grandchildren
and other relatives mourn his
passing and wish him eternal rest.

His body lies in state at #8 Dahlia St.,
Pembo, Makati City.

Interment will be on Thursday,
February 24, 2005, 9:00 am at
Libingan ng Bayani, Fort Bonifacio.

LOUIE C. CAMINO

October 10, 1952 – February 16, 2005

He is survived by his brothers and sisters-in-law, **Ling & Tessie, Gil & Evelyn, Tony & Olet, Freddie & Cora, Renato, Leopoldo & Estela**, and **Eddie & Estrellita**; nephews and nieces, **Cherie Lyn, George, Ronald, Juliet, Edward, Marianne, Maureen, Dan, Einstein, Dorothy, Zerla, Brian, Gino, Camille, Elvie, Pogs, Cielo, Rowena** and **Dennis**.

His remains lie in state at Saint Andrew Chapel, Holy Trinity, Memorial Chapel, Sucat Road, Paranaque.

Necrological Mass will be at 8 pm tonight. Interment will be on Tuesday, February 22 at the Manila Memorial Park in Sucat, Paranaque.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."
— *John 3:16*

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BSP may raise bank reserve requirement

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas is considering a hike in the reserve requirement of banks once it sees excess liquidity in the financial system.

In a press briefing, BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the institution was more keen on raising the reserve requirement instead of restoring a tiering system on its overnight borrowings as expected by some money market traders.

Bankers say there is so much liquidity in the system. But since they still exercise caution in lending to the private sector, they tend to dump their funds with the BSP instead. As such, some traders expect Buenaventura to restore the tiering system before his term ends this July.

Tiering is a system whereby the BSP pays a lower rate to overnight money placed in excess of P5 billion, to encourage banks to lend out instead of park all their funds with the monetary authority.

But Buenaventura said that the BSP was not yet keen on reviving the tiering system, knowing this would simply pump out more pesos into the financial system and thus bring down Treasury bill yields.

"If the BSP does a tiering, then the banks will liquidate [overnight placements with BSP] and they'll be forced to buy T-bills and there will be more excess liquidity," Buenaventura said. "The 91-day T-bill rate will be substantially lower and then it could have an impact on interest rate differential."

A narrow differential between domestic and foreign interest rates, Buenaventura noted, would slow down the inflow of portfolio investments into the country.

"Rather than tiering, we could just increase the reserves," he added. "It will cost us less and not increase liquidity in the system."

Buenaventura said that the BSP was now taking a look at the amount of liquidity in the system. He said there might indeed be excess liquidity in the system as indicated by the drop in T-bill rates.

"But that's partly because of the inflow of foreign exchange," the BSP chief said. "The banks are afraid to speculate against the peso because of the likelihood that the peso will strengthen rather than weaken against the US dollar."

"We're still looking at it from an inflation-targeting point of view," he added. "There's some [foreign exchange] volatility at the moment, and that's what we're watching."

The BSP is also concerned whether the banks' lending rates will be affected once the reserves requirement is increased, Buenaventura said.

If it would not exert pressure because of excess liquidity, then the BSP might go ahead with the tightening.

"But it's also possible that this surge in liquidity is temporary," the BSP chief saod. "The rates are too low so they don't want to lock in because they are still weighing the risk of whether the government will be successful in its tax reform program."

For instance, he said if the proposed value added tax (VAT) reform would be watered down or the power sector restructuring delayed, there would be pressure on interest rates to go up and in turn affect the exchange rate.

"That's why they want to keep liquidity in short-term instruments," Buenaventura said. "Banks, I think, are being cautious because they're not sure what will happen."

Meanwhile, BSP Assistant Governor for economic research Diwa Guinigundo said there was no excess liquidity in the financial system at this time.

"It's just that the banks don't seem to be lending as much as they used to so they have more resources to channel to government securities and ROPs [Republic bonds]," Guinigundo said, noting that commercial bank lending grew by only 2.6 percent last year. "[The banks] are saying there's lack of demand, but I don't think so. The private sector continues to have that need for funds, but banks really have to address their nonperforming loans because it's a big drag."

PAL won't move to Naia-3 unless gov't makes attractive lease offer, Tan says

By Clarissa S. Batino

TAIPAN Lucio Tan is putting his foot down, saying that the Philippine Airlines will not be moving to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 unless the Arroyo administration makes a "very attractive offer."

The PAL chair and chief executive officer said that moving the flag carrier's operations from Naia Terminal 2 to the new airport facility would be very costly for the airline company.

"We are happy where we are now," said Michael Tan, [head of the Lucio Tan Group of Companies] during a briefing with the INQUIRER last week.

According to the taipan, the airline business is very slow these days and PAL doesn't have the money to move to Naia 3.

"It is expensive to move," Tan said. "Unless the government would give us an attractive offer. If the rental is attractive then we could consider."

PAL is the largest airline operating domestic and overseas routes for passenger and cargo. The Arroyo administration is worried that the Terminal 3 would not be viable without PAL.

The government said it could open Naia 3 for commercial operations by June, after taking over the facility in late December amid unresolved arbitration cases against the private group that built the terminal.

The taipan said PAL had not even received an attractive rental offer from the government, contrary to the government claims that the flag carrier had agreed to move to Naia 3.

TAN

"PAL wrote to us, saying that they were ready to transfer to Terminal 3, provided that its domestic and international flights would stay in one roof," Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza said earlier.

The transport chief said the Arroyo administration would like to use Naia 2 for the domestic operations of all other airlines.

He said PAL was also having a hard time fitting in all its flights within Naia 2. "We need the Terminal 2 for domestic operations," Mendoza added.

The Arroyo administration is evaluating the requests of airline companies for a moratorium on any increase in aviation fees if they would transfer to Naia 3.

He said the plan was to offer a special introductory level of fees and charges to the new residents of Naia 3. He could not say if the government could keep aviation fees and charges unchanged and for how long.

"Airlines fear that if we make them transfer to Terminal 3, they feel we would transfer to them the burden of paying for Naia 3," said the transport chief. "But we will not do that. We will make sure that the fees would be reasonable."

Mendoza said that Naia 3 would try to generate profits from the rentals and other businesses within the terminal so as not to pass on the burden of raising the money from the airlines.

The Arroyo administration is spending about P700 million to upgrade Naia 3, including the construction of a peripheral road connecting Terminal 3 with the older airports, including the cargo warehouse near Naia 1.

Mendoza said ongoing inspection of Terminal 3 should ensure that the facility was structurally sound. The government earlier said Naia 3 had more than 40 construction defects.

The transport chief said the P700 million the government would be spending would not cover yet the establishment of a cargo facility within Terminal 3.

He said the plan was to build a separate cargo hub within Nayong Pilipino, which would be used by all tenants of the Naia terminals.

PAL operates 32 aircraft for its domestic and international passenger and cargo routes. It has been using the relatively new Naia 2 exclusively to service passengers, while all other carriers utilize Naia 1, the oldest terminal.

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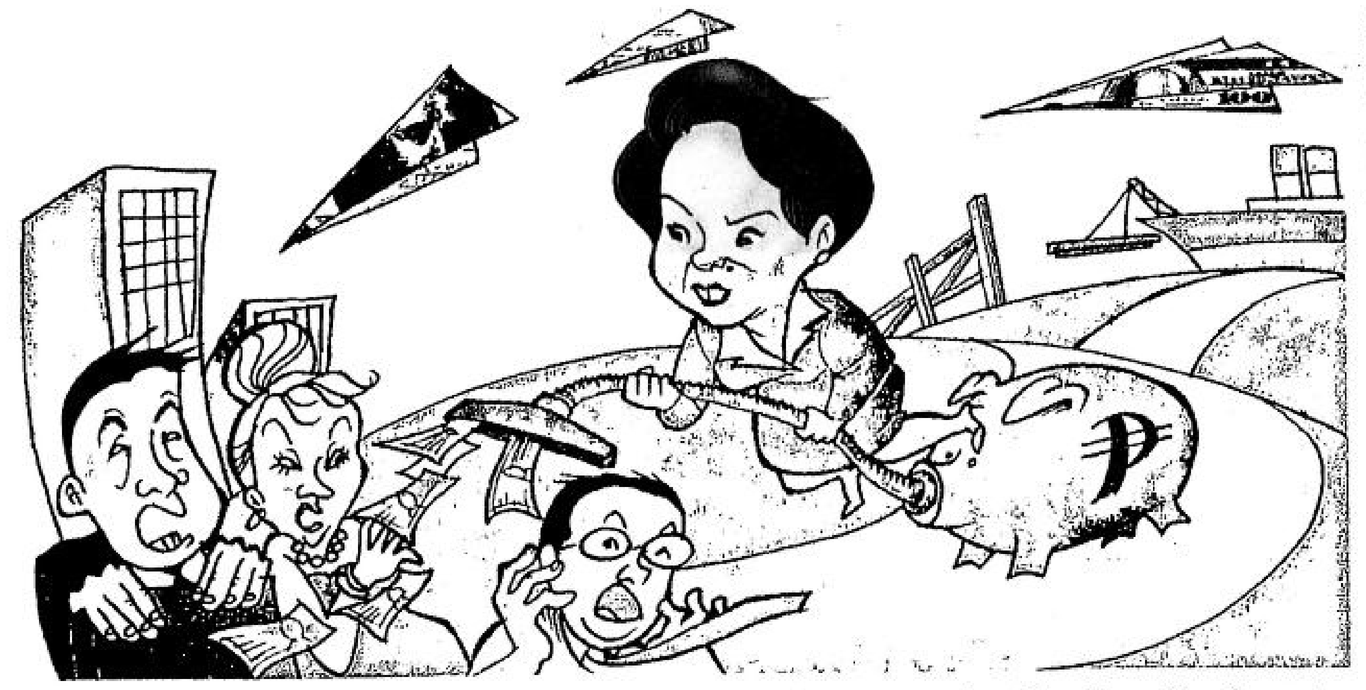
Some solutions to RP's economic challenges

By Dennis M. Arroyo
Contributor



THE EAGLE Watch briefing of the Ateneo Center for Economic Research and Development shows that the economy is not yet on a roll. The numbers are great for growth, the stock market, the peso and other variables, but there are major problem areas. I refer to them below as challenges and offer some solutions.

Share telecom growth

Growth is led by the services sector (7.3 percent growth), specifically by the hot streak in communications (16.7 percent). The giant telecom firms are reaping much from their text message services. The challenge is to democratize these gains. There should be a way for the telecom surge to benefit the lower income classes. One is by engaging ordinary folk in selling cell phone cards, but there should be a wider array of mechanisms.

As presented in a past article, I suggest that the telecom giants sell special edition prepaid cards whose proceeds are reserved for pro-poor projects. This money reaped from text messages will thus support the public schools by building more classrooms, buying more chairs, printing more textbooks.

Fight tax evasion

The fiscal situation is still fragile. While the deficit of P186 billion lies below the official target of P 198 billion, it still remains very large. The rating agencies have responded by downgrading Philippine sovereign bonds, making it more costly for the nation to borrow. The challenge is to attack the massive tax evasion that has caused the fiscal crisis. It is also important to charge the correct prices for public services like electricity, highways, and light rail fares. The bleeding of the government corporations must be stopped.

Agriculture rose by 4.9 percent for the whole 2004, higher than the 3.8 percent increase seen in 2003. But it slowed down to only 1.2 percent in the 4th quarter of last year. Worse, this year's harvests are threatened by a new cycle of El Niño drought. The challenge then is to ensure enough water for the crops through cost-effective irrigation. It would also be better to diversify away from water-intensive rice to the less demanding vegetables and cash crops.

Diversify exports

Exports are back to double-digit growth: they rose by 19.5 percent as of November 2004. However, they are heavily concentrated on electronics, and this makes the sector vulnerable to swings in the world market. It was not too long ago when factories here suffered from the slump in global demand. The challenge then is to diversify the export mix, to put more eggs in other baskets.

Promote direct investments

The stock market has been surging due largely to the inflow of foreign funds. The Phisix has broken into the 2000-point level. Beneficial though they may be, portfolio investments are volatile by nature; they can flow out as fast just as easily. The challenge then is to attract more foreign direct investments in the form of factories and firms. This can be achieved by making the country more competitive, particularly by filling in the gaps in infrastructure. The effort should focus on the Clark and Subic area, which the government is trying to develop into the logistics hub of Asia.

Offer cheap imports

Filipinos feel most keenly the crunch of high prices. In 2003 the inflation rate was 3.1 percent. Then in 2004 the official target range was 4.5 to 5 percent inflation. But it actually hit 5.5 percent last year, likely because of election spending. In fact it even reached 7.9 percent in December 2004. Prices will creep up this year as the state struggles to lessen the subsidies, to plug the leaks from government firms.

The challenge then is to find ways to lower the prices for other items so as to provide some relief. Import more rice from Vietnam and Thailand; it's just half the price of Philippine rice. Import more generic medicines from India; they are also half the price of the medicines here.

Widen scope of outsourcing

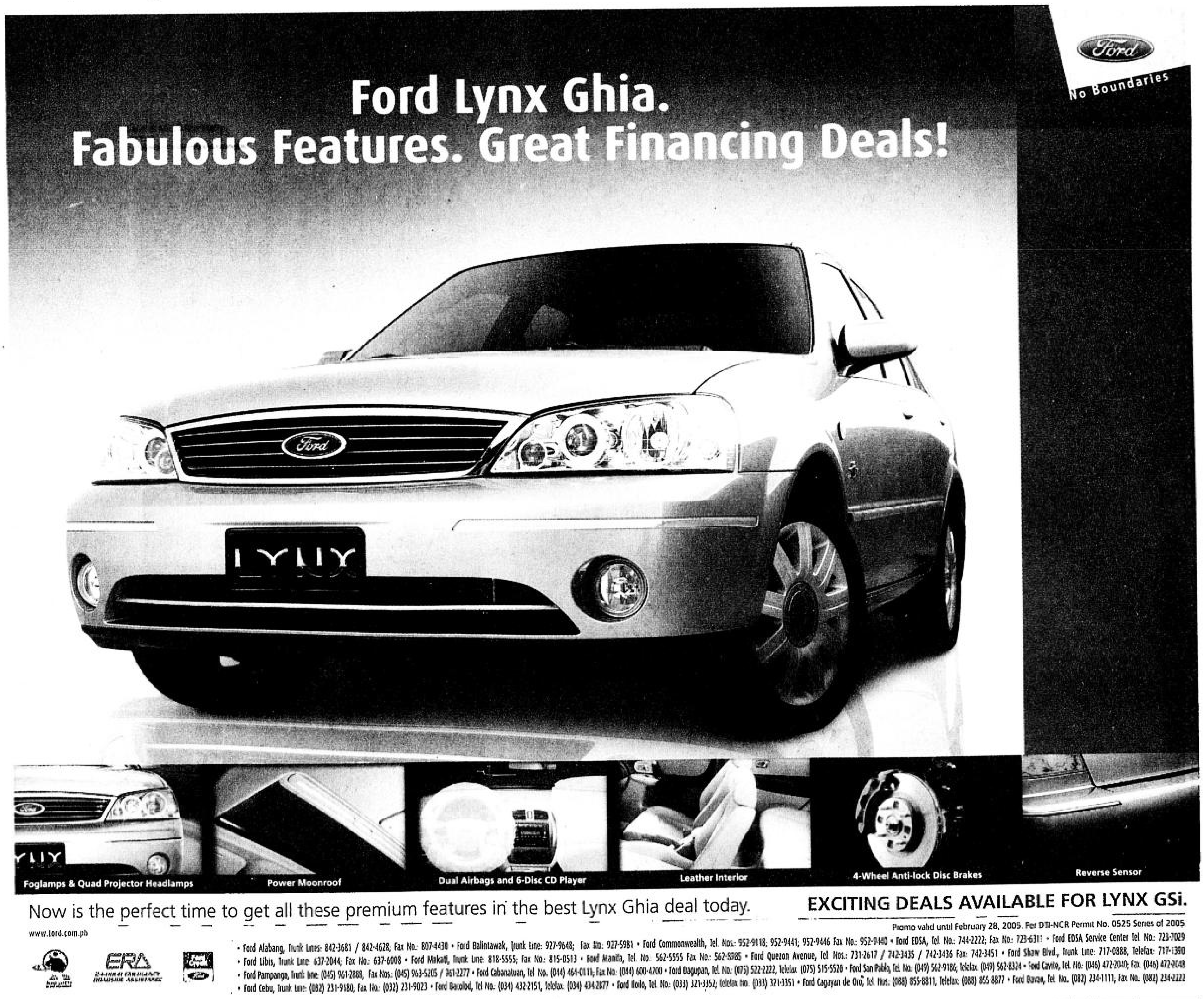
Then there's the unemployment rate, which hovers at a formidable 11.8 percent. The state does not have the funds to generate all these jobs but it can set the direction for the private sector.

For example, college graduates are flocking to call centers offering relatively high pay. The government should generalize the concept to the whole menu of business process outsourcing. Filipinos can do more than handle complaint calls from the customers of foreign firms. They can work here and e-mail their outputs to corporations in New York, London, Melbourne, Vancouver. They can prepare and e-mail financial statements, marketing analysis, industry overviews, software, animation, even songs. It's like being an overseas worker without leaving the Philippines.

Identify small enterprise winners

As for creating jobs for the poorer classes, it is vital to diffuse technology to the rural sector, particularly to micro, small and medium enterprises. Agro-processing activities can create a legion of jobs. For example, producing virgin coconut oil is very lucrative, and the product sells at P150 for a shampoo-sized bottle. Demand abroad is so great that the local supply can't keep up with it. The state would do well to identify market opportunities and empower the poor to seize them.

Comments to darroyo@philonline.com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Do we need a Department of Information and Communications Technology?

MAPping THE FUTURE

Manuel A. Alcuaz Jr.

THE HOUSE of Representatives is now working on House Bill No. 3218, an act creating the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), defining its powers and functions, appropriating funds therefore, and for other purposes.

This is an indication of the growing recognition of the importance of information and communication technologies for governance and economic development.

There is broad support for the department from the players in the information and communication industries.

I am perhaps the lone dissenter. My view is what you call the entity, department, commission, or National Computer Center is not critically important.

What is important is the leadership of the head of the agency, the support of the President, and the power given and exercised by the agency.

In the late '70s and early '80s, Col. Johnny Sanchez headed the National Computer Center (NCC). What started out as a government computer center became the government's policy and IT execution arm. NCC's theme was "Innovate or Stagnate."

The NCC took an active role in helping government agencies identify their IT requirements, and acquire IT systems. It was to the credit of Colonel Sanchez and his team that in a regime that was corrupt and graft-ridden, IT acquisitions were reasonable and honest. This was achieved by an open bid and awards process and the presence of idealistic NCC staff in all major IT acquisitions.

Perhaps the Marcos cronies left the IT sector alone because, at that time, IT expenditures were not very large.

It was only in the last few years that we have seen humongous IT projects, starting with the Top Web and culminating in 2004 with Comelec's P3-billion election automation fiasco. IT projects are becoming very large and it is important to rationalize these projects from the start and see to it that the acquisition is done fairly and honestly.

For a poor country facing financial crisis, the optimum utilization of its limited budgetary resources is critically important. If one takes the P3-billion Comelec modernization fiasco as benchmark, a careful analysis of the IT requirements could have easily saved at least 50 percent of the P3-billion budget. More competitive bidding could have saved about 20 to 30 percent.

Unfortunately, Secretary Virgilio Peña, chairman of the Commission on Information and Communication Technology, seems to be hesitant to take this role.

At the hearing in Congress last January 19, Peña's main justification for the creation of a DICT was to have its own budget to undertake department projects.

Knowing Peña, I am sure the DICT will have well thought-out ICT projects and that the procurement will be aboveboard. But what is more important is to stop the waste that goes on in the rest of the government.

DICT mission and objectives

The proposed DICT should have several key missions and objectives.

I feel the following are the main reasons for creating the DICT:

1. Effective and efficient use of ICT for governance.

2. Support economic development in collaboration with other government departments and agencies and the private sector:

- Development of the ICT industry
- Development of IT related exports
- Development of global competitiveness of other industries thru the use of IT

3. Support for broader and higher quality education in information and communications technologies and applications.

4. Development of a rational and cost-effective ICT infrastructure.

5. Consumer benefit.

6. Modernization of the Bureau of Posts.

Understanding DICT's emerging role

In order to understand the DICT's primary role, it is useful to study the IT department's role in a business corporation. I believe that the secretary of information and communication technology should act like a 21st century CIO (chief information officer), not like an EDP manager of the 1960s.

In the '60s and early '70s, the glory days of mainframe computers, there were no departmental minicomputers, and desktop PCs. Mainframes were physically big and very expensive, only large corporations and key government agencies could afford to have one.

The two commandments of computing were: (1) Thou shall have but one computer, and (2) It shall be an IBM mainframe.

The EDP department owned, housed and run the corporate mainframe. It practically dictated what data processing services could be availed of by the other departments of the organization.

The EDP manager and his boss, usually the finance or accounting manager, had control of practically 100 percent of the budget for computers.

The development of minicomputers, microcomputers, PCs, local area networks, laptops, handheld computers, and the Internet has completely changed the role of the EDP department.

The 21st century IT department no longer provides data processing services to end-users who now have desktop PCs or laptops with speed, capacity, power, and functionality greatly exceeding that of yesterday's mainframes. It no longer owns most of the computing power in the enterprise. It may no longer have a respectable budget to spend.

But today's CIO has a more strategic role due to the importance of information technology in corporate strategy and business processes. The CIO now reports to the CEO or COO.

The CIO's new role now is that of a leader and strategist, an architect, a consultant, an educator, a standards enforcer, and cost effective buyer. The size of his department's budget is not as important as the influence he has in cost-effectively IT-enabling the rest of the organization for competitive advantage.

If the DICT is created and the secretary runs it like a central data center or a giant network it will be a huge waste of money and will result in missed opportunities for governance and economic development.

Johnny Sanchez saw that long ago when he converted the NCC from an EDP center to the lead

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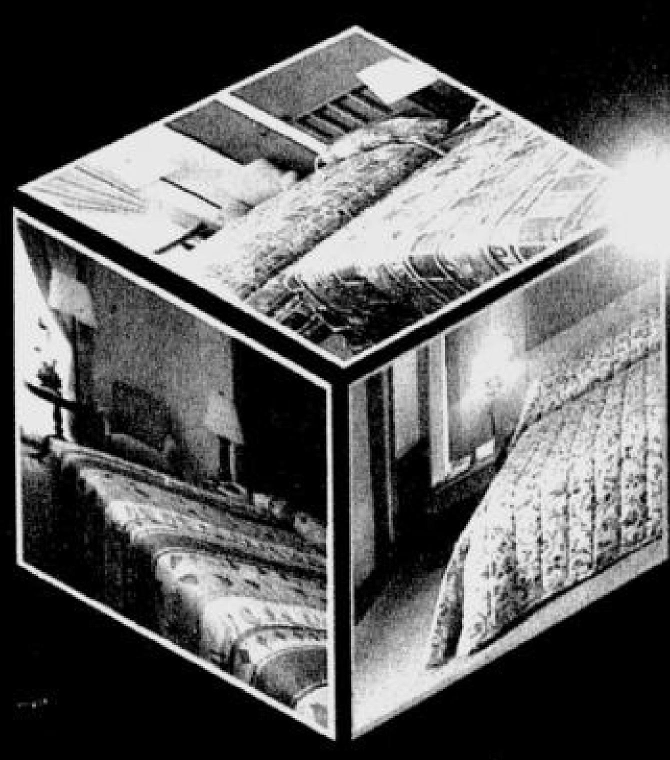

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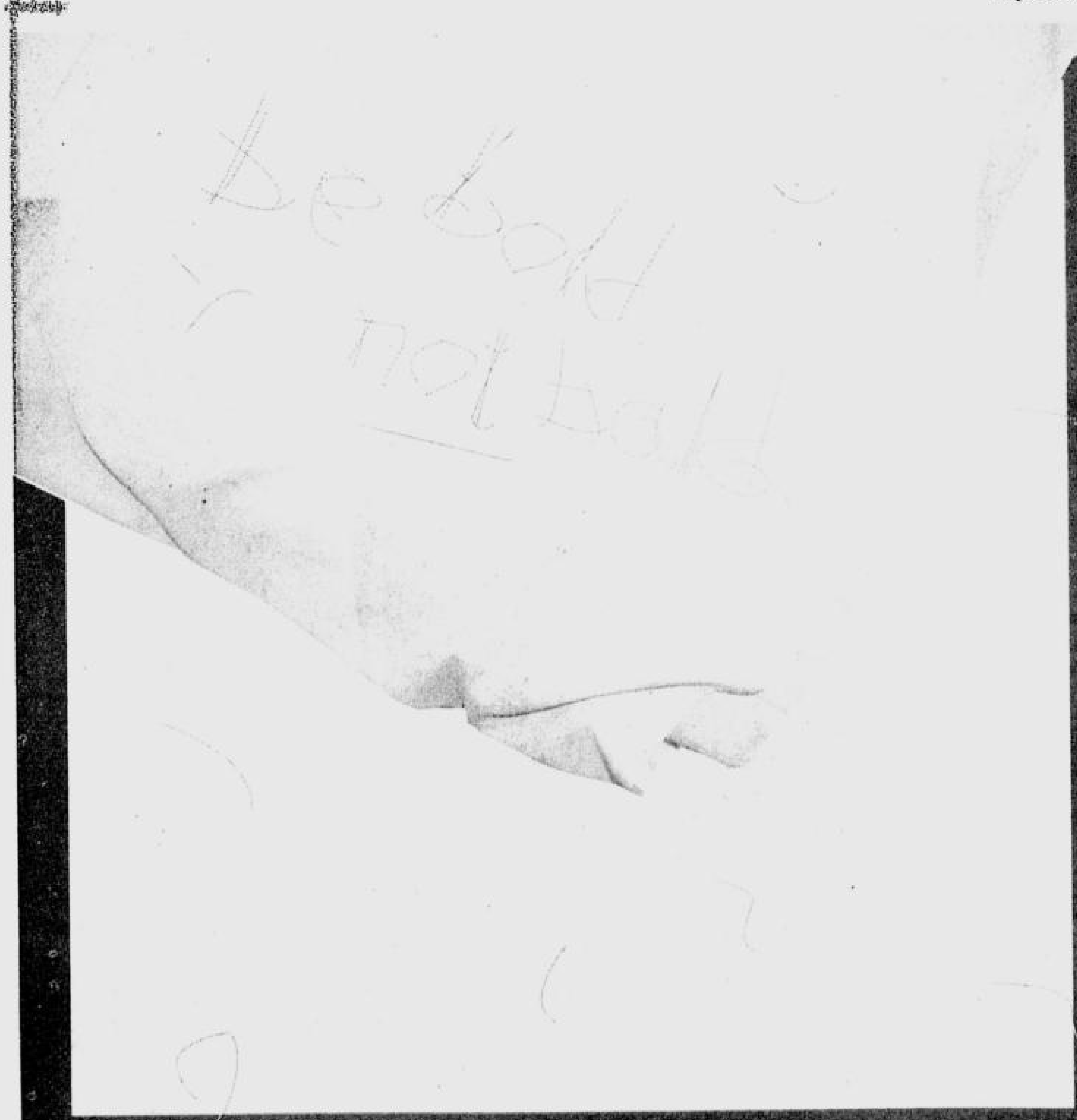

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Reference : 1. Libecco J. Expert Opin Pharmacother 2004; 5(4): 933-940
2. Kaufman K. Eur J Dermatol 2002 12:38-49

* In studies, hair has been regrown in MPHL patients, but individual results may vary from patient to patient.

MOVEMENTS

Philamlife announces appointments

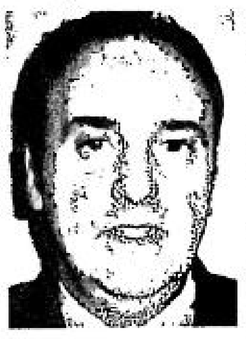
JOSE L. Cuisia Jr., president and CEO of The Philippine American Life and General Insurance Co., recently announced the following executive appointments:

Rex A. Mendoza is appointed EVP for sales and marketing. His area of responsibility will include agency sales as well as agency training and development. He will continue to be responsible over the different profit centers and will continue to be the international retirement services coordinator of AIG in the Philippines.

MENDOZA

The consolidation of these closely related functions will enable the company to have an integrated approach in addressing many concerns and goals in both marketing and sales and will allow support services such as agency training to be readily available to reinforce sales thrusts.

Mendoza obtained his BS degree in Business Administration major in Marketing and Finance from UP and his Masters in Business Management with distinction at the Asian Institute of Management.


GUSTINI

Carl S. Gustini is appointed SVP for Bancassurance and will continue to be concurrent president of Philam Equitable Life Assurance Co. (Pelac).

Prior to joining Philamlife in 2001, Gustini was national director of agency at AIA Australia and has been with the company for 18 years. He has had vast experience in both operational and marketing roles with line positions in the PA and group profit centers before taking on the role of national director of agency.

Gustini obtained his BS degree in Business from the Victorian College and his MBA from the RMIT University both in Australia. He is likewise a fellow of the Australian Insurance Institute.

Jewellord P. Peralta is appointed SVP for information technology and will continue to be concurrent president of Philam Systems Inc. This is in recognition of his exemplary performance as well as his expanded role in the organization.

Peralta joined Philamlife in January 1999 as head of MIS where he played a vital role in the smooth transition from Lifecom to Lifelines which has enabled the company to employ a more responsive and more flexible computer system and which effectively addresses Philamlife's requirements. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Engineering from the University of the Philippines.

PERALTA

Melvin J. Esteban is appointed VP for segments marketing. He started his career in Philamlife in 1998 as senior agency development officer and was subsequently promoted to senior manager to head the then newly created Chinese market department where he has displayed commendable performance in the pursuit of the department's goals.

With his promotion to the rank of VP, he will continuously lead the segments marketing team and is expected to further develop these markets.

Esteban is a graduate of the University of the Philippines with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics. He is also a fellow of the Life Management Institute and a registered financial consultant.

Herminia E. Nerona is appointed VP for internal audit. Nerona is a CPA and joined Philamlife in 1972 as an assistant supervising auditor and worked her way up to her present rank. Her having worked with SGV before joining Philamlife has provided her the necessary financial background enabling her to be well versed in insurance audits. She has competently performed financial audits of head office operations and has effectively liaised with external auditors in the required audit-sharing arrangements.

In her new capacity as vice president for internal audit, she is now expected to lead the internal audit division in addressing all the audit requirements of the Philam Group of Companies.

Juliet P. Guanlao is appointed VP for A&H, direct marketing and telemarketing. Her responsibilities now cover A&H as well as direct marketing and telemarketing of Philamlife.

Given that direct marketing and telemarketing are natural channels for A&H distribution, the consolidation of the areas mentioned is expected to sustain and improve the company's growth rates. Guanlao's many years of experience in promoting A&H and similar products in the past is expected to help the company in achieving its desired production goals.

Guanlao holds a BS degree in Business Administration from the College of Insurance in New York City. She earned her masters degree in Business Administration from the Ateneo Graduate School of Business.

Simeon F. Marcelo is appointed SAVP for Luzon branch operations. He will now officially take over the responsibility of overseeing the six Luzon regional offices.

Marcelo is a certified public accountant. He joined Philamlife in 1984 as office manager of the Baliuag branch office. Prior to his promotion, he headed the Baliuag regional office and has effectively provided the leadership required of him.

With his promotion to SAVP, Marcelo is expected to provide executive supervision over the Luzon branch operations and to continuously improve servicing level of branches to address the increasing customer requirements and changing demands of clients and agents.

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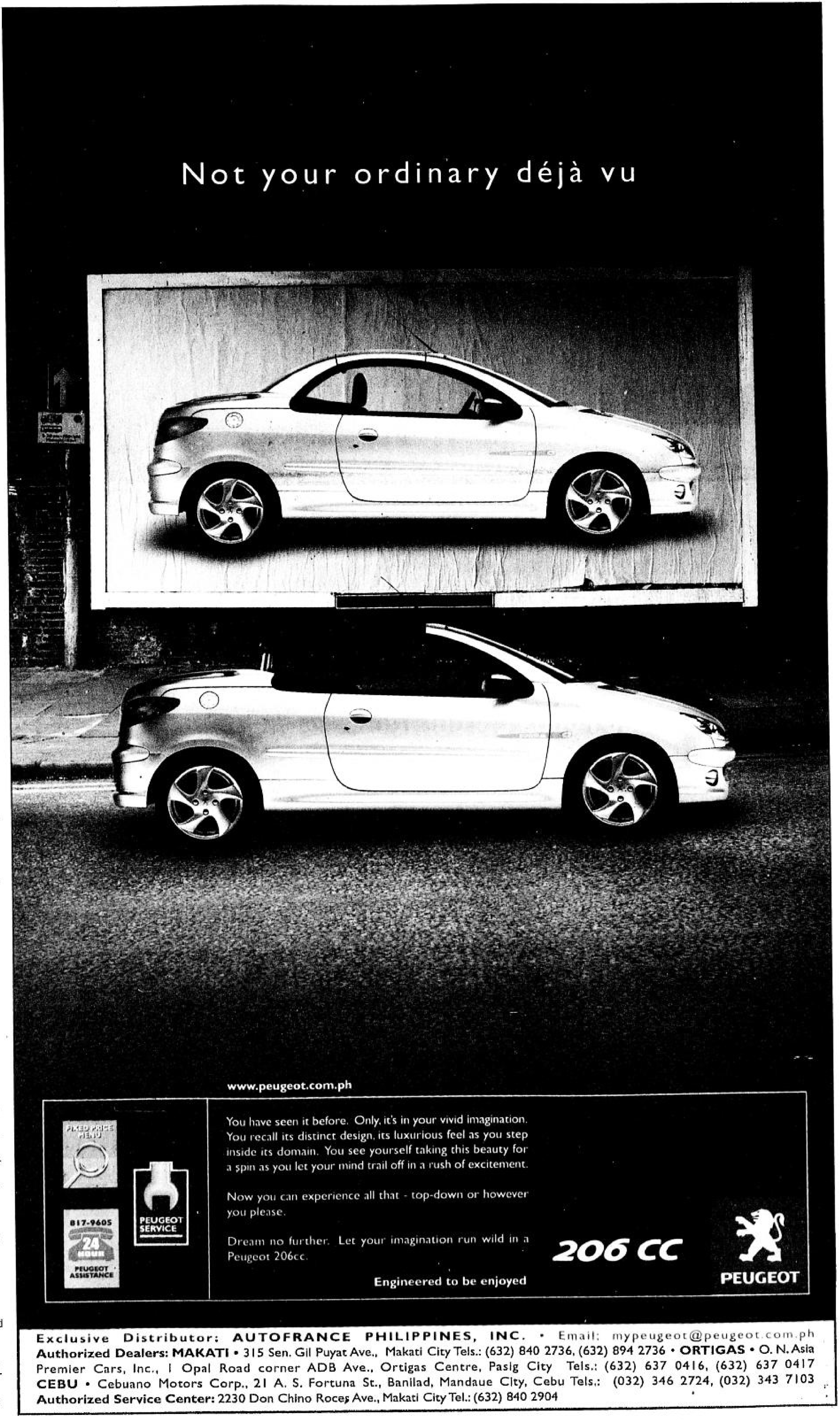
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Int'l group reports Philippine piracy levels down in 2004

THE INTELLECTUAL Property Alliance (IIPA), the international body which makes recommendations to the United States trade representative regarding the Section 301 Watchlist, last week released its report for the year 2004, showing piracy rates declining in three areas—movies, business software and entertainment software (applications and games).

For the year 2004, movie piracy was down to 85 percent from 89 percent in 2003; business software piracy was down to 70 percent from 72 percent; and entertainment software was down to 90 percent from 95 percent. Music piracy remained constant at 40 percent.

The statistics were independently generated and submitted by the respective industries. Piracy levels have been consistently on the rise since the year 1999. 2004 was the first time that piracy levels in the Philippines were seen to have gone down.

Despite the favorable statistics, however, the IIPA recommended that the Philippines remain on the Priority Watch List for now, but recommended that an out-of-cycle review be conducted in 2005 to evaluate whether their recommendations had been addressed by the Philippine government, and if so, consideration should be given to downgrading the Philippines to the watch list.

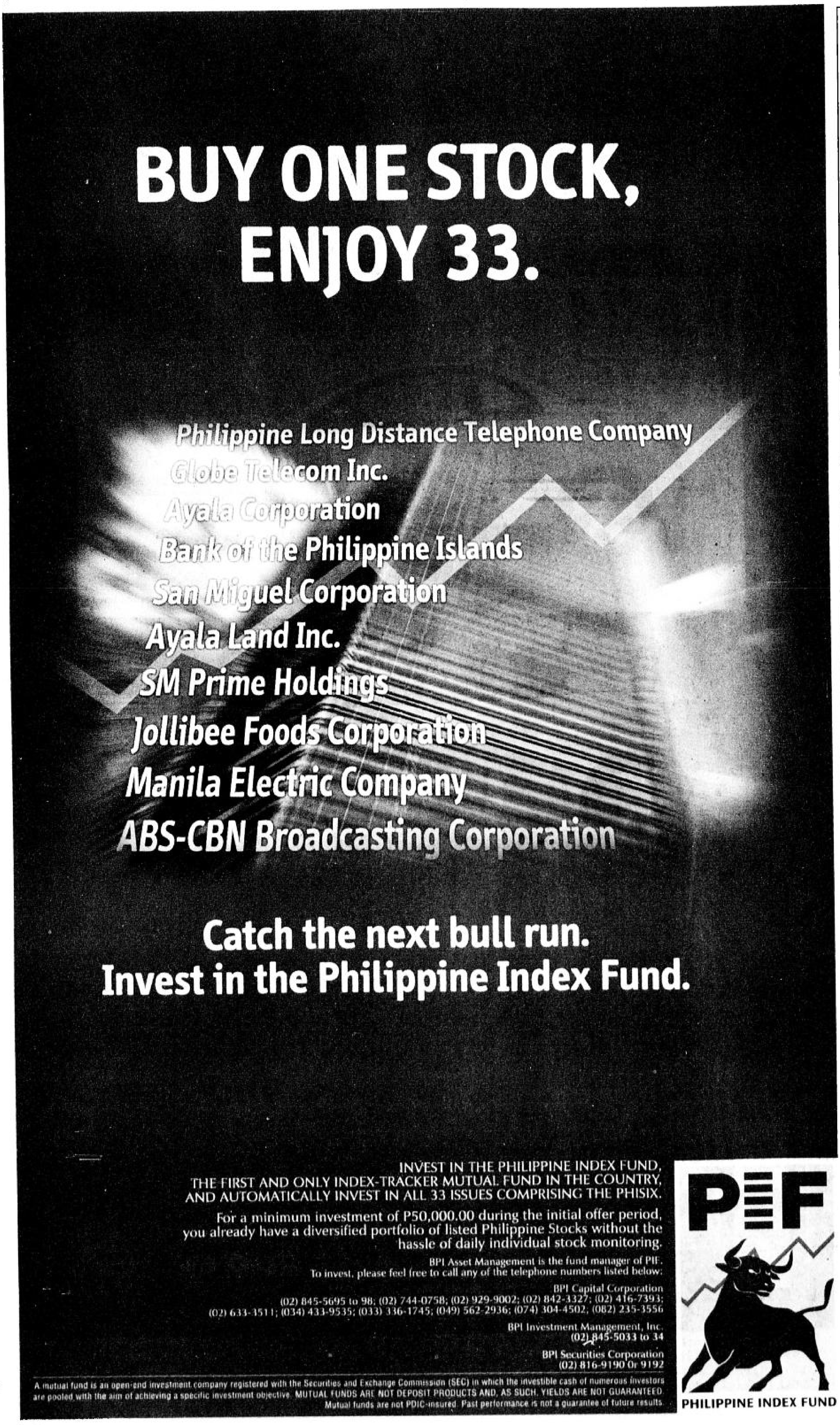
Among the concerns aired by the IIPA was Optical Media Board's (OMB) being given an adequate budget, now that the agency's IRRs have been approved and are awaiting final publication. Other concerns included rampant book piracy through uncontrolled photocopying, broadcast piracy, end-user piracy of business software, Internet piracy, and delays in the prosecution and trial of cases.

DESPITE an improvement on piracy levels, the Intellectual Property Alliance recommends the country remain on the Priority Watch List.

OMB chair Edu Manzano said he was very encouraged by the IIPA report, stating that the recommendation brings us one step closer to being downgraded from Priority Watch List to the Watch List. "It's like a breath of fresh air. The recognition of the Philippine government's efforts to eradicate piracy is the first step. There's still a lot to be done as far as optical disc piracy is concerned, but it's very encouraging to know that we've made a real impact, despite the obstacles we've had to overcome during OMB's first year," he stated.

Manzano said the OMB team, which had been operating for the past year without the benefit of implementing rules and regulations, is already gearing up for the full implementation of the law. "The morale at the office is high right now. Everyone at OMB is excited to start implementing the law to its full extent." Manzano revealed that the OMB staff will be holding a planning session early next month to set work plans for the next five years. Among the things to be discussed will be a comprehensive regulatory program that will not only check piracy but will also ease the burden on legitimate stakeholders. "That way," Manzano said, "we can achieve our goals for the industries concerned more quickly."

Incidentally, Malacañang, through Executive Secretary Eduardo R. Ermita, recently granted Manzano's request for permission to continue with his television appearances, reversing an earlier ruling by the deputy executive secretary for legal affairs. The executive secretary based the ruling on the finding that his work as an actor/television host does not conflict or tend to conflict with his official functions which concern the eradication of piracy and protection of intellectual property rights.



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First Index-tracker Mutual Fund shows strong finish in 2004

Stock market sentiment remained bullish especially when it reached its highest close this year at 2,014 last January 28. Investors are taking positions this early in anticipation of better earnings in 2005 with the improvement in consumption and on expectations that government will maintain its firm resolve to improve tax collection and control the budget deficit. This positive sentiment augurs well for the country's first and only index-tracker mutual fund, the Philippine Index Fund or PIF which showed a strong finish in 2004 with a full-year net return of 26.4% versus the average return of equity mutual funds of 15.21% for the same period. PIF ended the year 2004 with PhP413Mn in net asset value. This superior performance is the second in a row as PIF previously registered a 42.2% return by end of 2003 compared to the 12.9%-40.65% of other actively managed and competitor equity mutual funds.

PIF is an index-tracker mutual fund which investment objective is to provide investment returns that track the performance of the Philippine Stock Exchange Composite Index (PHISIX). Its investment portfolio consists of all the 33 issues that comprise the PHISIX in exactly the same weightings as in the index. It is currently the only mutual fund in the country which was granted a special approval by the Securities and Exchange Commission to be exempted from the 10% diversification limit imposed on local mutual funds.

PIF which was incorporated on December 2002 and launched in September 2003 immediately gained popularity among retail stock investors because of the benefits of convenience and affordability it offered to them. For a minimum initial investment of PhP50,000 during the initial offer period, investors can already ride the full upside potential of the entire stock market without having to pick individual stocks and bet which one will provide the highest return. With PIF, investors earn returns equivalent to that of the market. PIF currently stands as the largest equity mutual fund with 31% share of the pure equity fund market.

With market analysts seeing bullish signals as the PHISIX hits new highs, PIF aims to also start 2005 with a bang especially as a target level of around 2100 is projected for the year. So don't get left behind, CATCH THE NEXT BULL RUN!

ADVT

Three issues marketers should be ready to face

By Donald L. Lim

THE SPEED and complexity at which products and services are converging is one of the most important trends that is happening in the marketing world. This trend is now forcing organizations to innovate and adapt to the fast changing environment, and at the same time prompting management to reflect on how they really define their companies and the direction they will take in the next few years.

Marketing Convergence is the state where boundaries in marketing are brought down by marketing forces and developing technology, challenging the very essence of traditional marketing, and prompting marketers to be dynamic with the fast-paced change that is affecting every business.

This convergence brings about three major issues that every marketer should prepare for.

The first is the shift from product innovation to customer service innovation. Organizations should not look at product superiority as their core business advantage, as products can be easily copied and offered at a cheaper price in month's time.

However, organizations that focus on customer service innovations, interact and listen to the customers, will be the company of choice. Have we noticed that when we go out and buy something, we tend to appreciate the company that gives us a better service, rather than the one which gives us a better product or price? The "Customer is king" is more than a cliché, it is a business reality for organizations to survive today.

The second is to recognize that competition has now become multidimensional. A firm's traditional competition may not be their real competition anymore. Take a look at the money transfer facilities that were once raking in money from overseas Filipinos. Their competition has evolved from other money transfer facilities and banks to telecommunications company providing cash transfer through cell phones.

Fast-food burger chains used to compete with other fast food burger joints, but now fast-food companies have to take on the challenge of not only acquiring a higher share of stomach, but also a higher share of wallet. This is because some of the youth nowadays would forego lunch just to get to buy a load and text each other. As consumers become choosier in parting with their money, once an indirect competition of the company has now become direct competition.

The third and last area is about creating an organizational marketing climate within the company. For many years, organizations use to put marketing in the lowest rungs of the priority ladder and tend to focus on operations and sales. However, more and more, organization leaders are now realizing the importance of making their company a marketing company. Marketing now is not confined to the lively people in the marketing department.

Every employee in the organization has the task of marketing the company to its customers and stakeholders. Every employee of the company interacts with people outside, whether it is to the bank, suppliers, family members or friends. What they say about the company, good or bad, will leave an impression of the company to the people outside. Thus, the organization should acknowledge the importance of each of its employees marketing the company.

Dr. Peter Vaill, dean of the University of Washington, in one of his books, described the world as permanent white water, a metaphor to describe the chaotic and turbulent environment we live in. Imagine every day of our lives, we all wake up and attempt to navigate ourselves through white water rapids, flexing and exerting our physical and mental muscles as we go through the day. No wonder various stress relieving activities and medicines have been so popular. Would there be anyone alive now that is not yet taking stress vitamins, or has yet to enjoy an hour of spa, just to step out of the white water everyone is in? This therefore poses a challenge to every marketer on how to help their customers as they deal with permanent white water.

In the Philippine Marketing Association, we felt that the convergence of products and services, fusion of traditional and contemporary thinking, and old and new technology, should be understood by every Filipino to become world-class marketers. Thus, together with the board of directors for this year, we made it our personal advocacy to prepare Filipinos for marketing convergence.

Through the Agora Awards, the highest distinction given to a marketer, we will recognize the people who have defied traditional norms and brought their companies to greater heights through recognizing converging trends in their business.

This coming May is when we unfurled the National Marketing Conference, where we will introduce to everyone various companies and leaders who have spearheaded Marketing Convergence in their industry. We also have a marketing in government project that will venture into key cities in the south where together with our chapters, we will provide a series of marketing seminars for government units and agencies.

This year, we will also host one of the key regional meetings of the Asia Pacific Marketing Federation in Cebu, where key marketing officials from Asia will converge and we will discuss amongst ourselves marketing trends and issues.

Kaizen, a term in Japanese used to define continuous improvement, best describes the frame of mind every marketing person should have now. The world is fast changing, brought about by massive advancements in technology. Thus, it is the fundamental task of marketers to themselves abreast with what is happening with the world around them and keep the people in the organizations informed, lest they be caught flatfooted and find themselves as one of the floating debris in the white water rapids of this world.

(The author is the president of the Philippine Marketing Association and VP for Marketing of the Philippine Daily Inquirer)

Do we need . . .

From page B2-2

agency in innovating the use of computers in government and in rationalizing the acquisition of computer systems in government.

The DICT does not need a huge budget but it needs a lot of guts and talent.

The DICT should work with the other departments to provide leadership in innovative ICT applications for governance.

The DICT should provide the architecture and basic standards so that the government ICT systems can synergistically work together while having diversity. The Internet is living proof that this can be done.

The DICT should be a coach to the rest of government in planning ICT projects, procuring systems and services, and in evaluating the attainment of objectives.

In doing so, the DICT should avoid building up a huge bureaucracy. It should stay lean and mean. It should not try to be the whole orchestra. Its role is that of a great conductor.

Finally, the DICT must also take up the tough role of a regulator or referee. It must have the courage to veto ICT projects that will not be cost-effective even if the alternative is a non-IT solution.

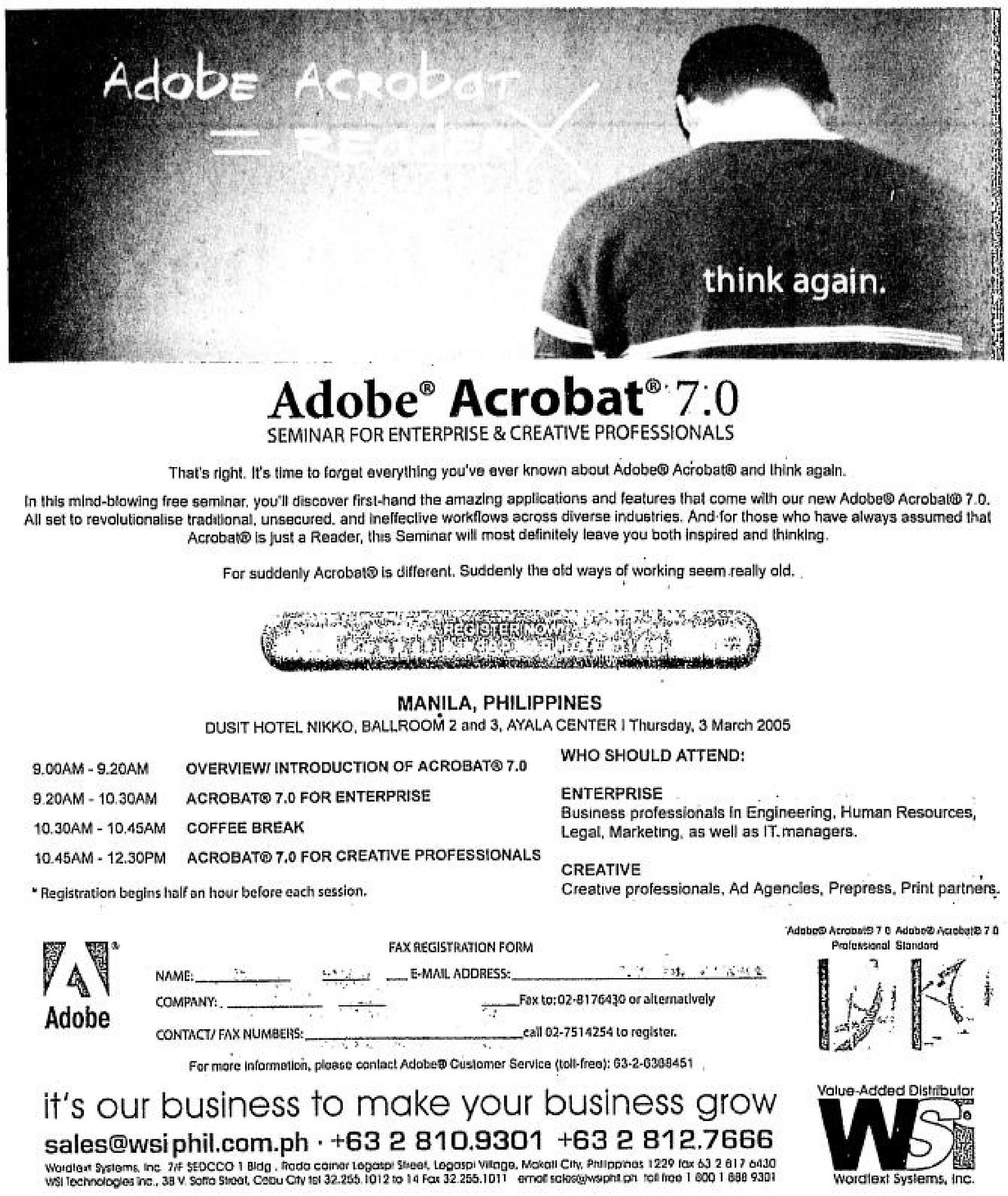
It must also perform an oversight role with the private sector in all major bids for ICT projects to see to it that more qualified bidders participate and that the bid requirements, criteria, and evaluation are rational, fair, and for the advantage of government.

For this to be possible, some sections of RA 9184 or the Procurement Reform Law, have to be amended.

Rep. Luis Villafuerte suggested that we incorporate special provisions for ICT procurement in the DICT law. This will be the subject of another article.

If the proposed DICT will be empowered to have a strong influence on E-Governance and the development of the IT industry, then I am for the creation of the new department.

(The author is co-chair of the MAP ICT committee and president of Systems Sciences Consult Inc. Feedback at map@globenet.com.ph)



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INQUIRER SALES AND MARKETING AWARDS

'Think out of the box, exceed expectations'

INQUIRER president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez

A TOTAL of 21 plaques, with the lovable Inquirer mascot stuffed toy Guyito on each of them, were awarded to the best performing sales and marketing officers of the Philippine Daily Inquirer during simple ceremonies at MyCinema, Greenbelt 3 the night of Feb. 8.

The awards ceremony was the culmination of another fruitful year for the country's leading broadsheet's sales and marketing team, which comprise the general display, classified ads, as well as the marketing and circulation departments.

Inquirer president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez praised the team for targets met, and even exceeded, in 2004. She also expressed confidence that the Inquirer sales and marketing group would come up with more creative and effective strategies in 2005 to win more advertisers to the Inquirer.

"I can always count on this team to never turn their backs on a challenge," she said.

Rene Reinoso, senior vice president for sales and marketing, urged those in attendance to "not rest on their laurels" and "strive even harder to exceed expectations."

"The Inquirer needs the help of everyone here," he said. "The Inquirer is where it is now not because of just one or two people. It is where it is now because of what every employee does for it," he explained further.

Reinoso also said creativity would play a key role in the Inquirer's continued sales and marketing successes in 2005. "Think out of the box," he said, hinting that the most fruitful results often come after exerting a certain degree of risk-taking and experimentation.

The awards night was capped with a free screening of the movie "Shall We Dance?" topbilled by Richard Gere and Jennifer Lopez.

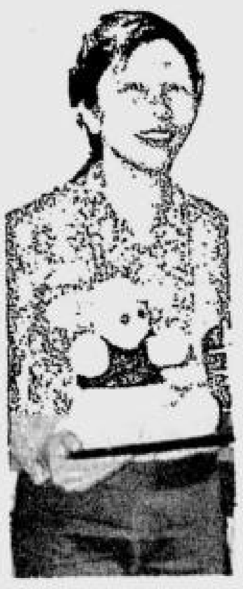
The Inquirer sales and marketing awardees for 2004 are: circulation's Nilo Alterado, Francisco Aguila, and Jose B. Sison for exceeding circulation collection targets; Resty Lee, most outstanding fieldman; Gelly Badocdoc, best material coordinator; Ian Gonda, best deskman.

Joel Macawile, production assistant/coordinator; Gemma Villapando, production specialist; Jhonna Gatdula, sales office assistant; Adela Mendoza, special award for highest production.

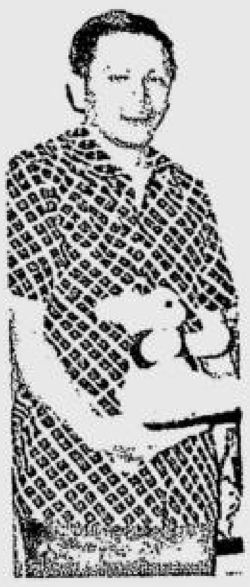
Liberty Lalicon and Arnold Gatdula, classifieds account executives of the year; branch manager Ramona Abad, special award; Imelda B. Limbo, branch manager of the year.

Izelle Medina, special award for high revenue sales production; Jenny Rockwell, highest revenue producer for 2004; Apollo Fontanilla, 2004 sales awardee for special products; Marlet Salazar, most enterprising supplement writer; Lita Pascual and Aggie Pinili, sales awardees for supplements; Aggie Pinili, overall sales awardee for 2004.

INQUIRER SVP for sales and marketing Rene Reinoso



CLASSIFIED ads' Liberty Lalicon consistently hit 135% of her quota.



DITTO for Megamall branch's Arnold Gatdula

THANKS to Jose Sison, Francisco Aguila and Nilo Alterado, circulation reached new heights

AGGIE Pinili and Lita Pascual sales awardees for supplements; the former also earning another Guyito for being overall best performing account executive for 2004.

LIBRE's Jenny Rockwell, highest revenue producer for 2004, and Izelle Medina, special award for high revenue sales production.

ADELA Mendoza, special award for highest production.

JOEL Macawile, production assistant/coordinator for 2004

JHONNA Gatdula, sales office assistant for 2004

BRANCH manager Ramona Abad receives a special award

IMELDA B. Limbo, branch manager of the year

Kita-kits next year, ha? Psst, panood ulit ng sine.

PHOTOS BY ROGER CARPIO

PRESENTERS all: from left, AVP for circulation Gloria Lardizabal, AVP and VP, respectively, for advertising Kenny Nuyda and Felipe Olarte, classified ads manager Jesse Rebustillo, president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, board chair Marixi R. Prieto, SVP for sales and marketing Rene Reinoso, and circulation manager for sales and promotions Bien Baltazar.

ITC-backed course for new breed of SME managers

THE UNITED Nations' International Trade Center (ITC) is out to spawn a new breed of Filipino managers for the country's small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through a diploma course developed in Geneva, Switzerland.

ITC is bringing the so-called EMDS course to the Philippines through its partner, the Association of Training Institutions for Foreign Trade in Asia and the Pacific (Atiftap).

An agreement has been forged between Atiftap and the De La Salle-College of St. Benilde (DLS-CSB) for making the diploma course available to the country's aspiring SME managers, owners and entrepreneurs.

More information can be obtained from DLS-CSB (at 400-5425) or from Atiftap (at 834-1350).

"Geared toward building competencies of managers or would-be managers, the course offers an intensive training that goes beyond the usual week-long workshops and seminars. It will offer a comprehensive knowledge base and skills application, especially in the management of export operations," said Atiftap president Luz T. Suplico

"The course, designed to ensure the competitiveness of SMEs in the global market, will therefore develop a new breed of managers and entrepreneurs who will rise and stand tall to the challenge of globalization," Suplico added.

To be offered by DLS-CSB starting May 13 this year, the course involves special training in the use of frameworks, systems, technology and other EMDS materials developed in Switzerland, according to Dr. Jose Edgar Mutuc, Atiftap vice president.

Mutuc said the agreement on the matter was signed recently by ITC Geneva EMDS chief Dr. Osman Atac, DLS-CSB vice president Dr. Rizaldi C. Nocon and Dean Leonardo Garcia, and Philippine Trade Training Center Executive Director Adelaida Inton.

Time to make a difference!

SIGN up for the Hands On Manila New Volunteers' Orientation on Feb. 23, Wednesday, 6 to 7 p.m. at the Powerbooks Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati City. A few hours will allow you to volunteer in any of Hands On Manila's 40 service projects. You will have options to help in programs involving children and youth, clean up projects, culture and arts, or computers and technology, elderly-for as little or as often as your schedule allows!

Hands On Manila Foundation Inc makes it easy for you to help others through the flexibility model of volunteer service. Groups and corporations may also participate in various projects that take place before and after office hours, and weekends. Simply attend the new volunteers orientation and you will be ready to make a difference.

For more information, call Hands On Manila at 843-7044 and 843-5231, or e-mail handsonmla@edsamail.com.ph.

Make your employees your customers

By Art Villasanta
Contributor

I FIND it odd that Filipino companies or Philippine-based companies hardly ever bother to sell themselves to their employees. Do company employees need to be sold on the company they work for, you might ask?

The straight answer is, yes. Because employees are employees for only eight hours a day, six-and-a-half if you exclude the one-hour lunch break and two 15-minute meriendas.

Beyond that, employees are individuals who work for themselves. And all of a company's managers and staff are also customers who'll buy a competitor's products or patronize his services if they're convinced these are better than their own.

Company loyalty means just that—employees are loyal to their company. That loyalty doesn't automatically extend to a company's products or services. Brand loyalty has to be earned, even from a company's employees.

And even if a company's products or services can't be used by its employees (call center services, for example), a company still has to work hard at promoting itself to them. That's a good way of keeping hard-to-find employees, especially in leading edge industries such as call centers and business process outsourcing (BPO).

How does a company promote itself to its employees? The answer is to give employees a steady stream of information in a personalized package unique to the company.

Ideally, this information should build company and brand loyalty; foster productivity; create support for the company's goals; make clear the company's stand on vital issues and contribute to the bottom line.

That package used to be the company newsletter. Nowadays it's also the company Intranet. The company website? Not quite since websites are impersonal salesmen that sell to the world.

Company newsletters used to be a big thing before the PC. Now, they're going the way of the Philippine Eagle and the few that survive are finding it hard to continue on in the face of anorexic budgets and lack of skilled staff (editors and writers).

The latter, I guess, is the key reason for the dying out of the company newsletter. There simply aren't that many good English editors and writers in today's labor pool.

Ask the broadsheets. One of my editor friends, who also teaches journalism, complains that writing two paragraphs of passable English is a daunting challenge for many reporter candidates. And some of these people graduated with degrees in journalism or English!

If mass media is finding it next to impossible hiring good English writers, imagine what it's like for corporations. Companies won't usually hire an employee specifically to be a newsletter editor or writer.

A company usually assigns the newsletter to its human resources unit, which is usually understaffed and overworked. HR then appoints the newsletter's staff after frantically searching its database for employees with even an iota of English writing experience.

When this fails, as it most often does, HR either does the job itself or cancels the newsletter. It might also hire an experienced editorial consultant to assist in providing content and layout for the newsletter.

Producing a printed or online newsletter is always tough. Ensuring its continued existence is even tougher considering its investment.

But you'd have to weigh the cost of this investment by the value of what you stand to gain. Newsletters impart information, a commodity that has value only when read.

Information, if intelligently used, is the basic building block of all sales. You buy because you're convinced—sold—on the information presented to you. Advertising only jazzes up this information.

A newsletter or any other information carrier "sells" information to a market—a company's employees—who are already half sold on the value of their product or service. The extra information provided by a company newsletter could push employees into becoming paying customers.

And there are also the other intangible advantages to the information provided by a newsletter. Advantages like improved productivity; stronger teamwork; a closer alignment with company goals.

A surprising bit of information is a recent report by US retailers that TV is no longer the most influential advertising medium. Surprisingly, word of mouth and news inserts have replaced TV as more effective advertising media. E-mail and the Internet are also generating a lot of advertising buzz.

Word of mouth. Email. The Internet. Companies have these in abundance.

News inserts? That's what newsletters are for.

Redefining . . .

From page B2-8

adopted International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) issued by the International Accounting Standards Board. Seen as a shift from the rules-based standards—which many white-collar criminals were able to sidestep partly because it was too detailed—to principles-based standards, the IFRS aims to provide accountants with a conceptual basis for good reporting.

"The new ethical, accounting and auditing standards provide guidelines on how CPAs should do their work, conduct themselves, prepare their reports, and also what ethical and professional standards they have to meet," explains Navarro, who lauds the development.

"But these standards are new not only to the Philippines, but to the rest of the world as well, so there are no precedents or prior guidelines on how to roll them out."

This is where ACPAPP hopes to play a significant part. For the past ten years, the association has been very active in standards training, with institutional members collaborating in sharing resources and collating training materials for the instruction of the individual members and small practitioners. With the adoption of the IFRS, ACPAPP is laying out plans to make sure CPAs—even those practicing in outlying provinces—will have access to IFRS materials and will be instructed in its tenets.

"Not all practitioners can afford to attend the seminars abroad, or even dole out P60,000 for training fees," reveals Navarro. And that's precisely why he has hit the road running as ACPAPP's new president: "We're joining the worldwide reform not just as a follower, but as proactive professionals; we're taking a bullish attitude toward these changes."

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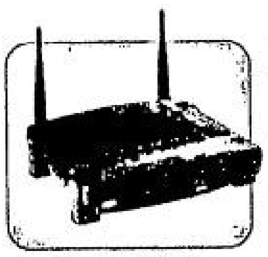
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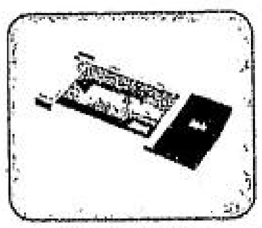
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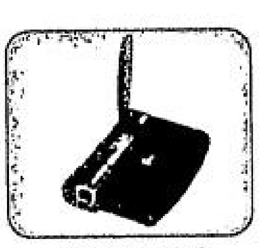
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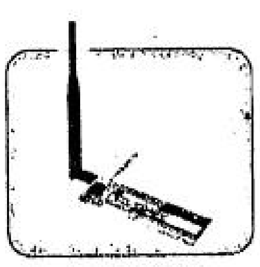
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What is success?

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

RAY KROC, the former milkshake machine distributor who founded McDonald's when he was in his early 50s, once made an insightful statement about the relationship between luck and achievement. "Luck is a dividend of sweat," he said. "The more you sweat, the luckier you get."

Compare Kroc's rather tongue-in-cheek comment to the lottery mindset that some people actually have about success. "Some day my number will come up," they think. "I'll be at the right place at the right time and voila! I'll find my four-leaf clover and achieve all my dreams. All I need to be successful is a little bit of luck."

With that kind of attitude, success is the last thing those folks will ever experience. Unfortunately, the idea that successful individuals are "just lucky" is not the only erroneous notion many people have about success or what it takes to be successful. Here are several other incorrect thoughts that can hamper a person's ability to succeed.

1. Success is mystical

People who have this view aren't exactly sure what it is that makes someone successful. But they believe that, once they discover that elusive "secret to success" themselves, they'll be well on their way to reaching their desired level of achievement.

2. Success is viewed with suspicion

Individuals who fall prey to this myth are constantly looking at successful people and asking questions such as, "Who did they take advantage of? Who did they make money off? Who did they run over to get where they are?" They simply can't believe that anyone could become truly successful without taking shortcuts or using other people.

3. Success equals hard work

This is the theory that says, "The early bird gets the worm, and if you want to be successful, all you have to do is work your tail off from sunup to sundown." This idea looks good on paper, but it doesn't always pan out in real life. I firmly believe in the virtue of hard work, but I also know lots of very hard workers who haven't been very successful.

4. Success is an event

If you have this mindset, you are constantly looking for that milestone event—a powerful conference, a key decision, an important meeting, the attainment of a specific title—that is going to be the turning point in your quest for success.

Unfortunately, success doesn't hinge on any one event or place; it's a growth process—a journey.

5. Success triggers envy

This can take many different forms. There's blatant envy—"Why does she get all the accolades and all the responsibility and not me? It's not fair." Other times, the jealousy comes across as passive resignation: "Success comes naturally to him, but it's never going to come to me. It's simply beyond my reach."

6. Success is in the future

It's one thing to be optimistic about the future. But it's another thing entirely to think that, if you're patient, you're just going to happen upon success someday. You're more likely to find a pot of gold on your driveway tomorrow morning than you are to find success "somewhere over the rainbow."

7. Opportunity equals success

People who hold this common misconception think, "If I could just get one big break, then I'd be on my road to success." They're waiting for the right opportunity to fall into their laps—the big break that will change their lives forever.

8. Success hinges on a relationship

In other words, it's not your fault that you're not successful. You were simply born into the wrong family. Or you didn't make the right friends in college. Or you haven't made the right connections in your industry yet. But as soon as you meet the right person, you'll be on your way.

Do any of these ideas sound familiar? Perhaps you know people who hold these views. Or maybe, if you're honest, you have thought them yourself. If so, I'm here to tell you that success is within your reach right now. It's not some pie-in-the-sky concept that only comes true for a select, privileged few. It's attainable for you—today.

The secret to success can't be found in some mystical self-help book. It is determined by your willingness to improve yourself and your commitment to starting that process now—not tomorrow, not next week—but today. In the next few columns, I'm going to give you some insights about improvement that will help you either to lay the groundwork for success or to build upon the success you've already achieved.

In the meantime, don't put off until tomorrow what you can achieve today. If you want to succeed, start growing.

Feedback at Dr Maxwell c/o slvguru@pldtDSL.net

Redefining the public accounting practice

NAVARRO

IN HIS ACCEPTANCE speech as the 2005 president of the Association of Certified Public Accountants (CPAs) in Public Practice (ACPAPP), Greg Navarro very candidly described the current predicament of CPAs by borrowing Dickens' famous opening line from the novel A Tale of Two Cities: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Looking back at recent events that affected the profession and what CPAs now have on their plates, the comparison could not have been more apt.

Four years after the biggest scandal in corporate America brought down a leading power company and one of the big five accounting firms, CPAs all over the world are still struggling with the slow climb towards rebuilding the public's eroded trust. "The scandals urged accounting professionals everywhere to take a hard look at themselves," says Navarro, who is also managing partner and COO of Punongbayan & Araullo, a leading public accounting and tax advisory firm in the country.

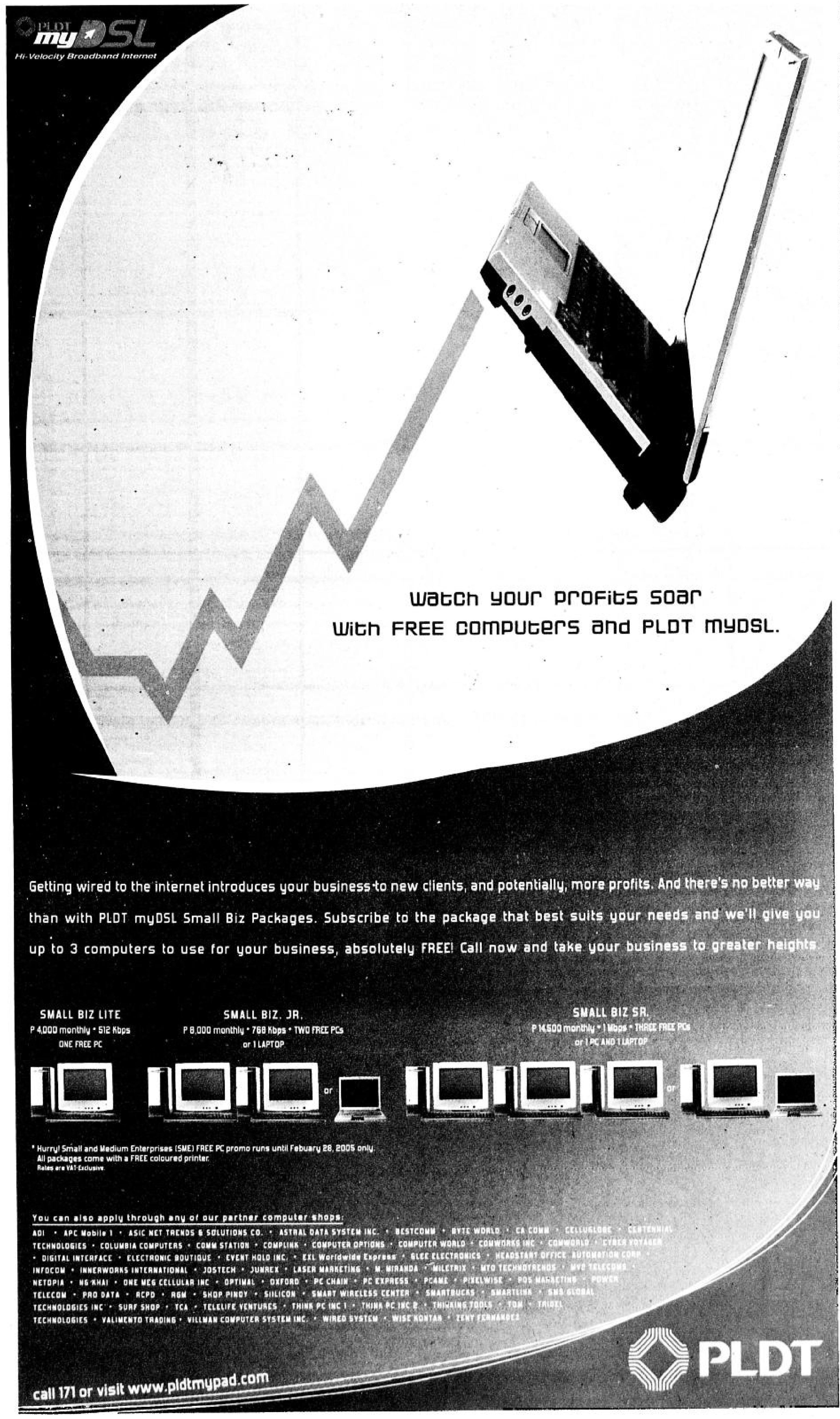
In the Philippines, CPAs were already cleaning house even before the scandal broke out; early in 2001, the Philippine Institute of CPAs approved the adoption of international auditing standards (as promulgated by the International Auditing Practices Committee) to establish a global, more comprehensive benchmark for local practitioners. The move would effectively put local CPAs in step with their global counterparts in harmonizing financial reporting standards.

The government has also put in motion a measure to curb corporate abuses. House Bill 286, or the Corporate Reform Act, mirrors the US' Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 and proposes to establish clearer standards for corporate accountability and impose tougher penalties on violators.

"The country has its share of Enrons, Tycos and World Coms," admits Navarro, who has taken on the theme CPA Redefined: Setting the Standards for Good Governance for his term as ACPAPP president. As the local advocate of individual and institutional public practitioners, ACPAPP is likewise throwing its weight behind efforts at strengthening integrity in the country's corporate culture.

One of the association's main concerns right now is training CPAs on the details of the newly

REDEFINING/ B2-7



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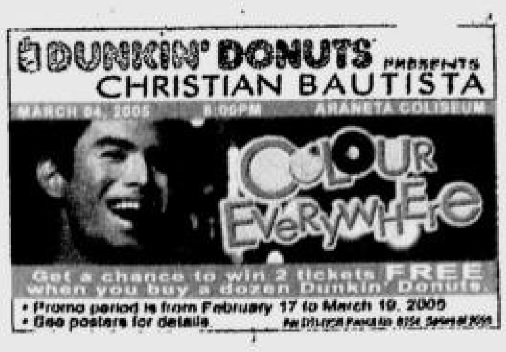
ARTISTS paint a blooming Baguio /C3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Antique's ancient Santo Niño icon stolen

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

HERITAGE vigilantes in the Visayas have advised that people should be on the lookout for the ivory head and hands of the Santo Niño image that had been stolen from the main altar of the Church of the Holy Child in Bugasong, Antique, last Jan. 30.

Identifying marks: the head is about 15 cm high with an ivory face and back portion of wood; right hand is raised in blessing and the tip of the left hand's second finger is chipped.

Because of the active antique market, rampant thievery of church art goes unchecked in this country, causing collectors to unwittingly fence stolen items. However few collectors are as principled as the one who, upon verification that an image he purchased was stolen, returned the image to Baclayon Church in Bohol where it rightfully belonged.

The theft of the Santo Niño ivory sends a strong signal for parish priests to finally undertake a thorough inventory of heritage property in their care, which has been strongly suggested by the CBCP Permanent Committee for the Cultural Heritage of the Church and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. Only a few parishes have complied with the inventory.

Parish priests must be made aware that as custodians of some of our nation's most significant heritage, they are responsible to the Filipino people for safeguarding our national treasures.

Transmit any information about the missing ivories immediately to the Museum of Arts and Sciences at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila (tel. 7811815, fax 7409718; e-mail cc-cpet@mnl.ust.edu.ph), or call Bishop Romulo de la Cruz at the Diocese of San José de Antique at San José de Buenavista, Antique (tel. 036 5408186; fax 036 5409667).

Heritage run

What used to be the yearly Pasig River Heritage Marathon has matured to what is now the Philippine Marathon for the Pasig River. Held every last Sunday of February, the marathon is now an international event accredited by two international organizations, the Association of International Marathons and Road Races and International Association of Athletic Federations.

The international marathon refuses to shake off its Filipino identity. The route threads from old Mania to the new, starting in colonial Intramuros to end in ultramodern Global City. It weaves in and out of Manila, Mandaluyong, Makati, Pasig and Taguig be-

ANTIQUE'S/ C8

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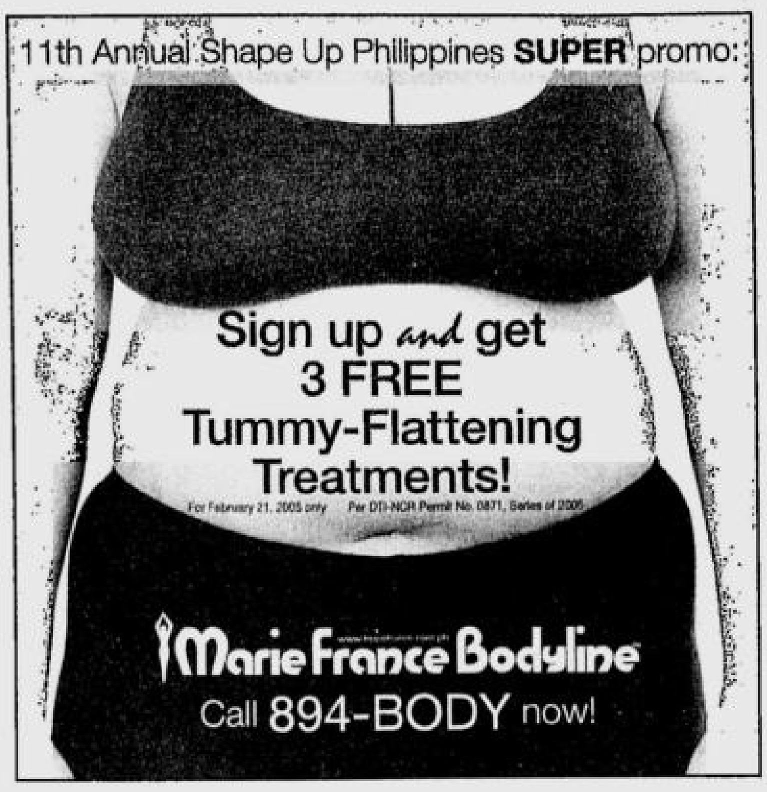
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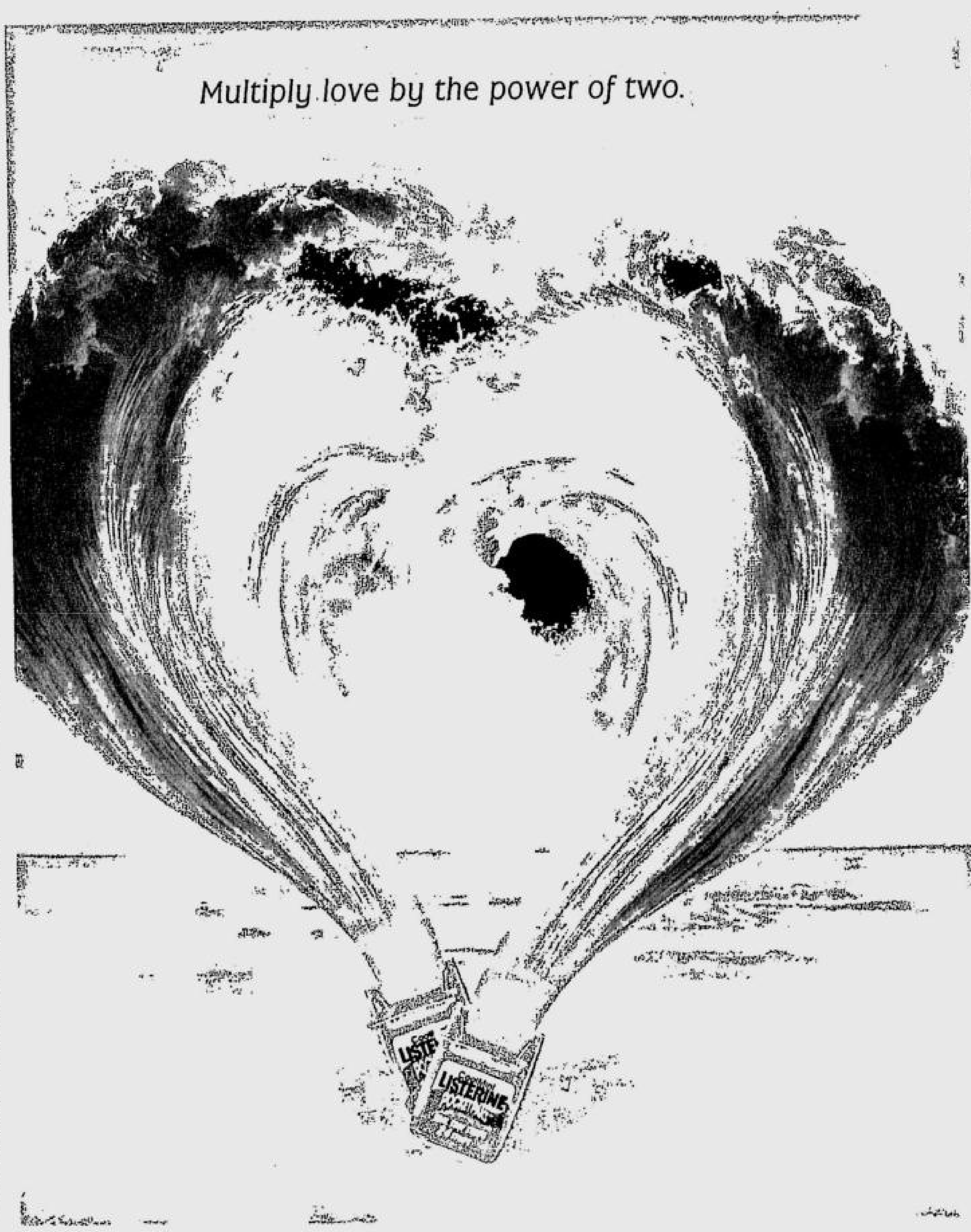
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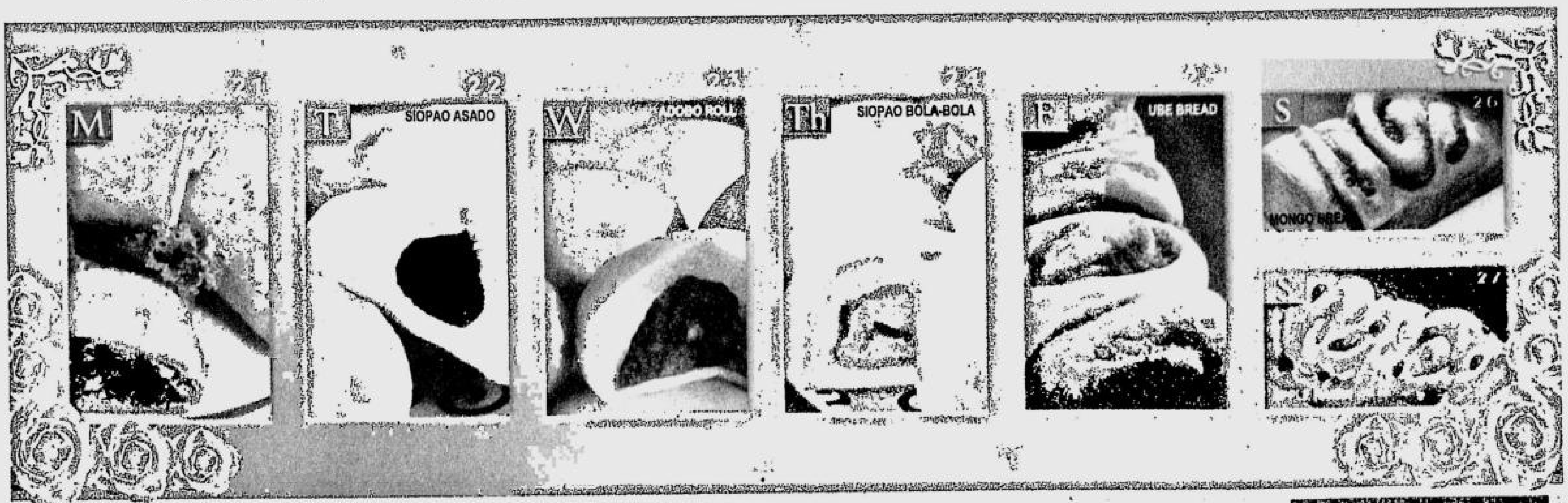

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THE BLUEROOM stands in a quiet corner of suburban Makati.

REDEFINING the art gallery concept by creating a minimalist yet distinctive ambiance to set off the varied artworks

INQUIRER editor in chief Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc with Makati City Councilor Rico J. Puno at the ribbon-cutting ceremony

Art amid the rubble

By Constantino C. Tejero

PHILIPPINE art must really be booming. More than the outstanding showing of Philippine masterpieces in art auctions abroad, the visible sign is the cropping up of art galleries right and left in Metro Manila and other urban centers.

They suddenly appear like mushrooms even in unlikely places. Two years ago, one opened under the MRT tracks at one end of Guadalupe Bridge in Makati City. Last November, another opened amid the thrift shops of Bangkal.

Blueroom Art Gallery is this latest addition to the boom. Its name notwithstanding, its walls are slate-gray, there's not a touch of blue anywhere near, except for the ornamental strip of ultramarine tiles ringing the building and dividing its two levels.

The name refers to its owner's love for the blues. An audiophile, Fine Arts professor and abstract painter, Rafael Ignacio has a passion for rhythm and blues, collects vintage vinyl records, and sells them in his thrift shop annexed to the gallery.

The gallery used to be the ground floor of his house at 1354 Gen. Lacuña St., Bangkal, Makati City, which he renovated to showcase the artworks of his students in the Technological University of the Philippines College of Arts and Trade.

"They're winners in art competitions," Ignacio says of these budding artists. "It is to showcase their talents that I've opened this gallery, and not to sell art that's merely commercial."

He designed the exhibition area himself, including the lighting fixtures and sound system. It is a 30-sq m room with irregular shape, overhead spotlights, tall rectangular windows.

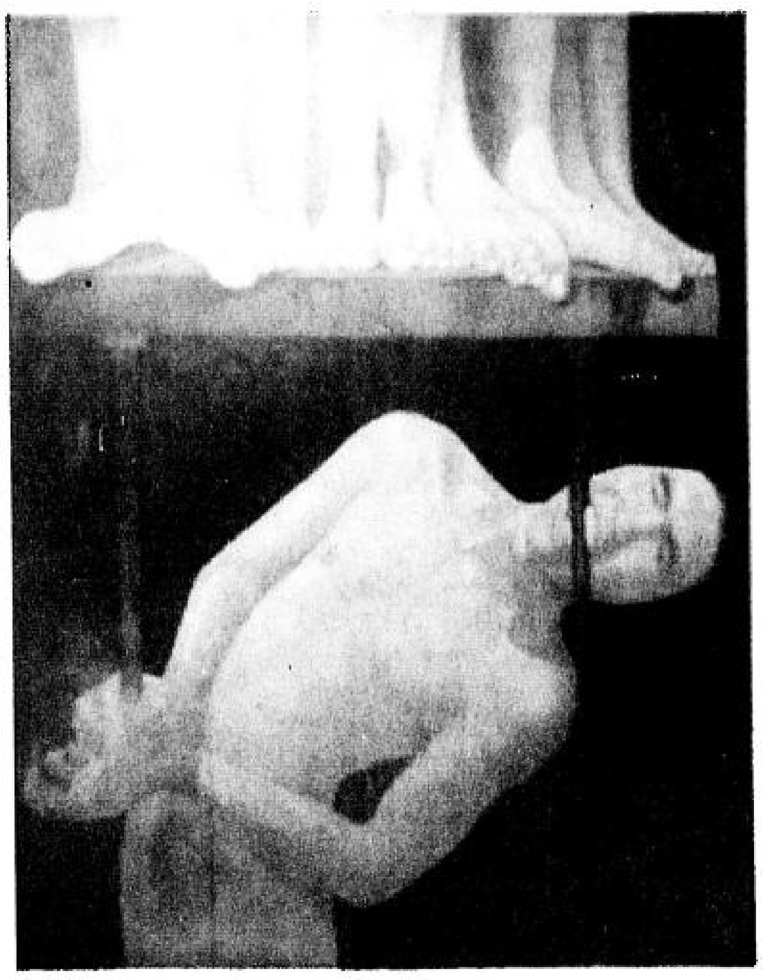
The artworks on the walls are mostly Figurative Expressionist, with some abstracts. The music is, of course, jazz, the blues.

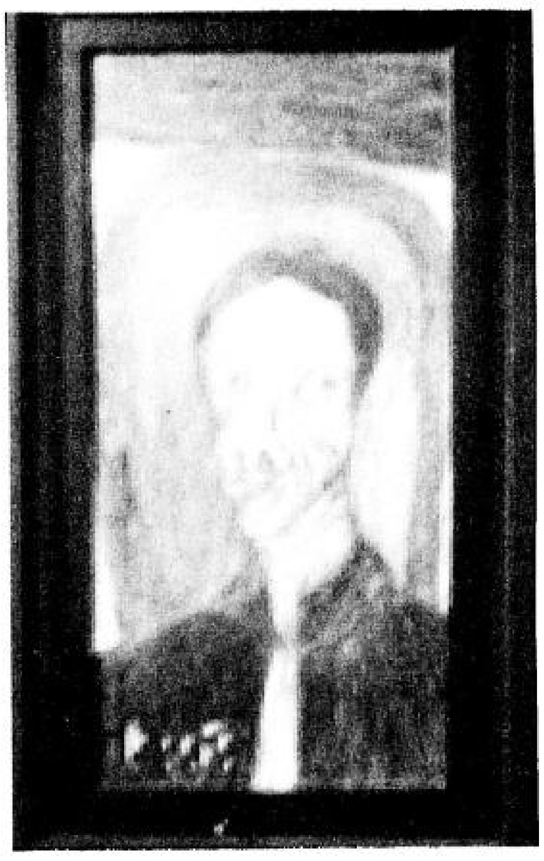
"Sometimes it's classical, depending on my mood," says Ignacio.

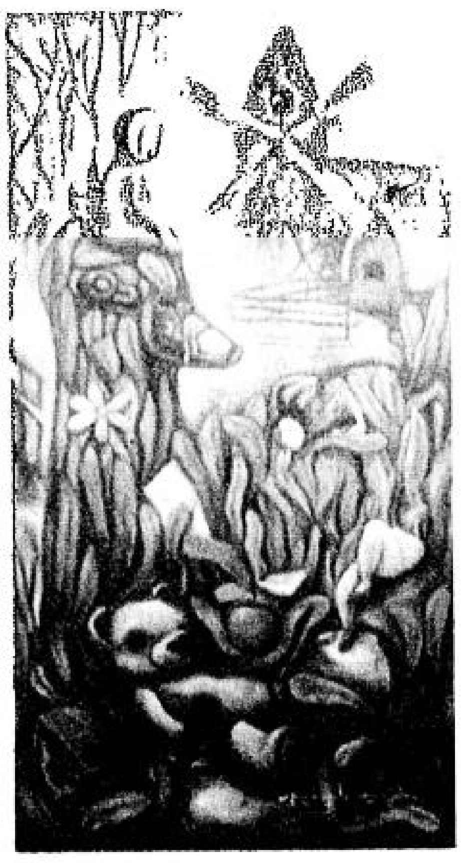
The exterior just as easily identifies the

ART/ C4

CLOCKWISE from right: "Capacity Loaded," by Rommer Fajardo; "Background of Doubtness, " by Ryan Rubio; "The Last Performance of a Crying Clown," by Froilan Calayag







LIGTAS BUNTIS 2005

The campaign is dubbed in TAGALOG with a catchy phrase "Ligtas Buntis" 2005.

"Ligtas" means "safe" which means that women's safety is paramount;

"Buntis" means "pregnancy" when put together it means either:

Ligtas na pagbubuntis which means SAFE pregnancy and childbirth.

Ligtas sa Pagbubuntis which means safety from risk or unwanted pregnancy.

What is the objective of Ligtas Buntis 2005 Campaign?

The Ligtas Buntis 2005 Campaign aims to identify and deliver the needed FP and Maternal Care information and services to the target population (2 million women and men of reproductive age).

When will the Ligtas Buntis 2005 Campaign be conducted?

The Ligtas Buntis 2005 Campaign is set for February 1 to March 31, 2005. It will highlight the celebration of the International Women's Day on March 8, and Women's Month in the Philippines.

Who are the target clients for Ligtas Buntis 2005 Campaign?

The primary targets are pregnant women, post partum mothers, post abortal women, men 15 years old and above, couples and women of reproductive age.

The secondary target clients are Adolescents 15-19 yrs old, and women and men with reproductive tract infection.

What are the priority areas of the campaign?

The campaign will be conducted nationwide, however, priority will be focused to the following areas where family planning and maternal care services needs are high:

A. Urban poor / slums and remote rural
B. Barangays in cities and municipalities established to be among the 25% poorest
C. Communities of indigenous people
D. Difficult areas
E. Pre-identified areas (through surveys, etc...) with high family planning and maternal care services needs

Republic of the Philippines Department of Health

Ligtas Buntis

Commission on Population

GENE Gonzalez out of the kitchen

KAWAYAN de Guia, fresh from being named Philip Morris Jurors' Choice, paints Session Road

Baguio is blooming again

By James P. Ong

REPORT from Baguio City: the streets are safe, the city's alive and kicking, and the arts scene has never been this exciting.

On the recent Valentine weekend, along the stretch of Session Road, Kawayan de Guia culminated what became a two-week project: mosaicing the pothole-ridden road. Now 26, the artist was a Philip Morris Jurors' Choice awardee last year.

On the same weekend, Camp John Hay's The Manor hotel decided to throw a big to-do for loyal clients and media guests to drum up publicity for the city and send the message that not only is it safe to come back to Baguio–it was never unsafe to visit in the first place.

Like the rest of the city's population, The Manor's general manager, Heiner Maulbecker, still feels that reports from Manila over the last months exaggerated the cases of meningococcemia in the Summer Capital, doing great harm to its tourism and service industry.

"The first order of the day was to ask our City Hall to get a certificate from the World Health Organization stating that Baguio is safe," he says. And so now, their hotel rooms are supplied with this update: "Most of the suspected cases did not show positive results for meningococcemia after the obligatory testing but were reported in the press as actual meningo cases. All reported deaths caused by this bacteria were due to ignorance about the proper treatment of the disease, because meningo is easily treated with antibiotics, just like any other bacterial infection."

ALAN Cosio sketching

Baguio artists hold sessions at Camp John Hay's The Manor to show there's an epidemic–of art, beauty and gracious living

Cultural weekend

The weekend event was billed "Weekend of Romance, Fun, Art and Culture" and featured local singers and dancers, as well as special meals by resident chef-wonder Billy King.

A special highlight of the event was an on-the-spot painting session with senior-artist couple, Alan and Ivy Cosio, Gene Gonzalez and Baguio-based Felipe Mayoya.

"Baguio is always a conducive place to create art," says Cosio.

The works of all three are also on exhibit at the hotel.

In a way, this push for artists-in-residence is just a continuation of a tradition started by Maulbecker back when he was managing the Hyatt hotel in Baguio. "I give the artists food and lodging so they can create art which we then put on exhibit," he says.

Maulbecker is optimistic that the tourism industry in Baguio will make a positive turn soon. In fact, The Manor is already building a second hotel nearby, a part of which is expected to be operational by December.

The next few weeks will be a flurry of cultural activities not just at the hotel, but in the entire city itself as it celebrates the month-long "Panagbenga."

Artist and filmmaker Eric de Guia, a.k.a. Kidlat Tahimik, is curating this year's flower festival, which he entitled "Balik Bulaklak," to stress its "return to the floweriness of the festival." He says the past festivals had been too commercialized.

One of the resolutions this year is to ban streamers and posters along Session Road. There are also a series of flower-themed activities all over the city.

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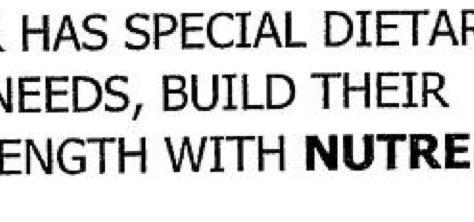

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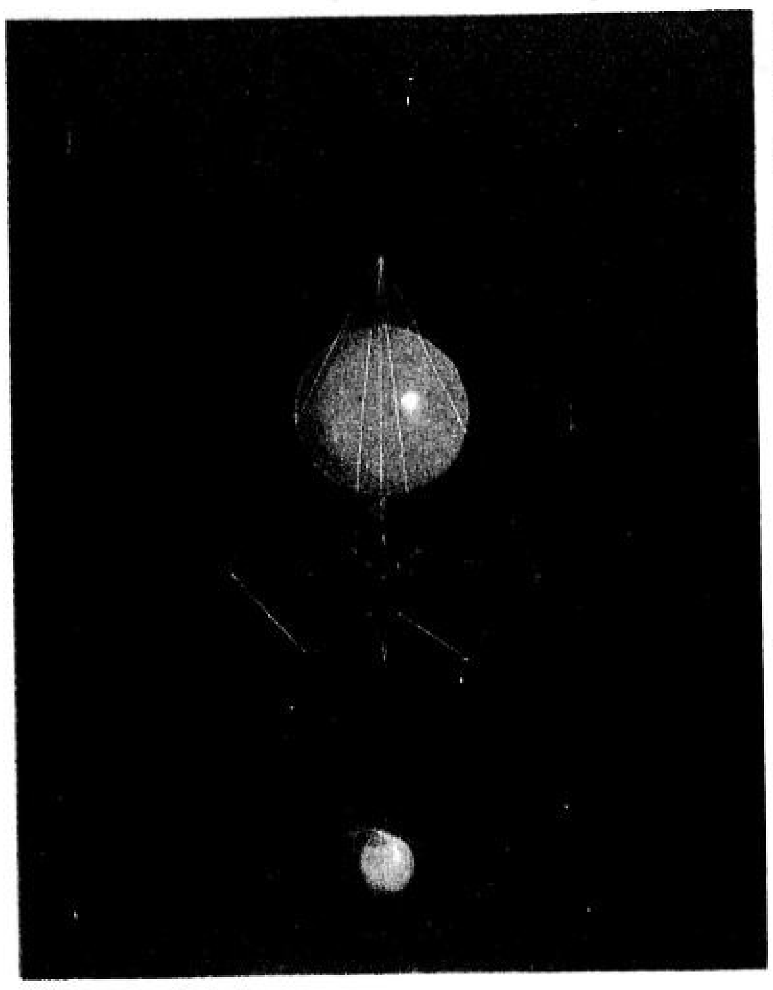
[1] Walzem, R.L., C.J. Dillard, and J.B. German. Crit. Rev. Food & Sci & Nutr 42:353, 2002 [2] Heister A. Cancer Res 1994;54(5):1969-1975.

[illegible]

Astra combines figurative and abstract works in show

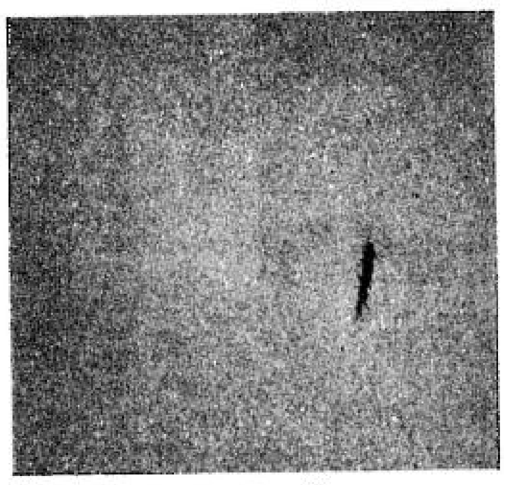

"WILL," by Jethro Jocson

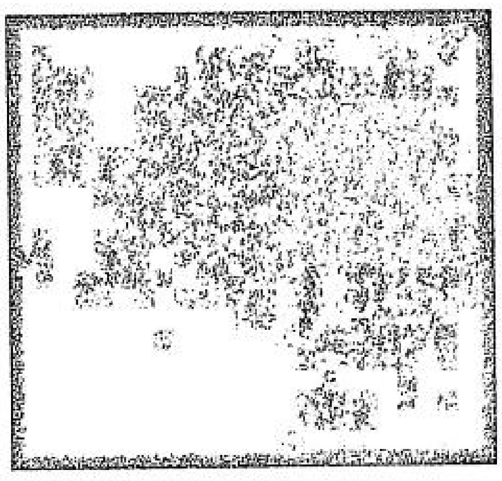
ASTRA Gallery (210 LRI Business Plaza, Reposo St., Makati) will open the exhibit "Cognitive" on Feb. 21, at 6:30 p.m. The show brings together figurative artists Ian Quirante and Jethro Jocson and abstractionists Art Bermido and Francisco Magbanua.

The artists say: "Is cognitive value a necessary condition for a high degree of aesthetic value? To have cognitive value, they say, an artwork must not only make new insights available, but also justify those insights: After all, knowledge requires justification. In short, should an artwork, to be worthy of the name, contribute to knowledge?

"Illustrative representation, by providing us with an experience that resembles in certain ways the experience of the represented object, can present and demonstrate the correctness of a perspective on the represented object. On the other hand, contemporary art, while often shying away from illustration, makes extensive use of tools such as appropriation and contextualization that allow it to probe deeply into a wide variety of topics, including those most central to our understanding of the human condition.

"This exhibit eliminates the term *non-cognitive*, because whether your creation imparts new insight or just an expression of oneself, it is no doubt worthy of the name 'art.' The vision is, 'Artists undivided by behaviors!' and the object is to eradicate the notion of 'high art' and 'low art.'


"STIMULUS" 88, by Bermido


"STIMULUS" 82, by Art Bermido

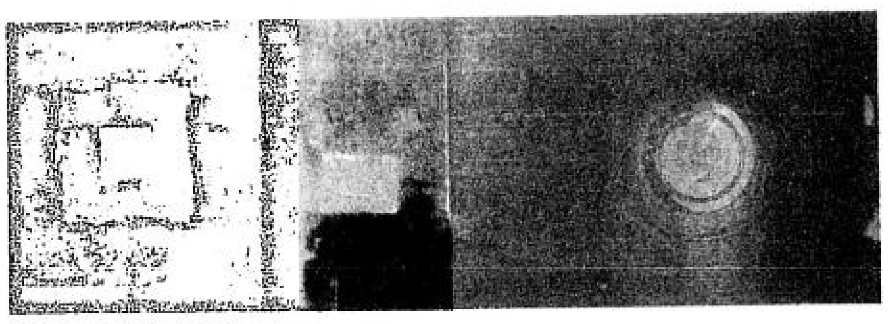
Carlo Magno works unveiled at BMW

ABSTRACTIONIST Carlo Magno unveils his latest works at Prestige Cars BMW, Makati City on Feb. 24 at 6 p.m.

Titled "Abounding Prosperity," the exhibit features 20 works to welcome the Year of the Rooster, which the artist believes will be a propitious year for the Philippine economy as well as for Philippine art.

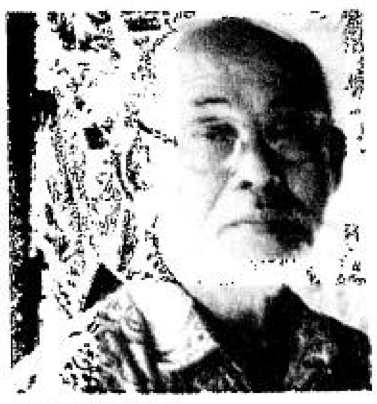
Magno has won art contests, including the grand prize of the Hispanidad Art Center. His influences are Asian, particularly Eastern civilizations and ancient cultures. For this show, he moves away from the strong and bold textures of gestural abstractionism and more into Eastern abstractionism of many Japanese and Chinese artists. The works are more introspective and thought-provoking.

Prestige Cars has embarked on a major art appreciation campaign by hosting top contemporary artists in its main showroom. Prestige Cars is at 2324 Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati City. Call 8928127 or 7239253.


"GOLDEN Moment"

BMW 325i M Sport
CARLO Magno beside a BMW 2005 325i series

Feati students' works on exhibit


NAPOLEON Abueva

ARACELI Limcaco-Dans

NATIONAL Artist Napoleon V. Abueva will be the guest of honor at the opening of Feati University's "Sining Pinoy," an art exhibit by Feati University's students of fine arts, architecture and engineering.

Feati University's senior art consultant,painter and art educator Araceli Limcaco Dans, is supervising the exhibit.

"Sining Pinoy" opens on Feb. 28, 4 p.m., and will extend to March 5, to commemorate the 59th anniversary of Feati University.

Other guests are visual artist Janice Young and architect-painter Joven Ignacio. The exhibit is open to the public.

Call 7367437 or 0918-2215367.

Art amid the rubble

From page C2

place as an art space, distinguishable from the drab shops selling second-hand electronic items and household discards and recyclables lining the street. As a visiting journalist has commented, the place has ambience.

Its entrance is flanked by a pair of long low benches improvised from found timber. Scattered around are potted plants, a screen of recycled wood strips on one side, and a coffee table by the glass-panel door. Above is a trellised awning of corrugated fiberglass sheets throwing patterns of light on the pavement.

The gallery was opened on Nov. 29 with the exhibit "Nov'blue," which ran through January. These are works by Rommer Fajardo, Thomas Daquioag, Joey Cobcobo, Froilan Calayag, Ryan Rubio, Lynyrd Arwyn Paras, Jevijoe Vitug, and Ignacio himself, with Bobby Nuestro as guest artist.

Among the notable pieces are Rubio's "Background of Doubtness," in oil on matte board; Cobcobo's "Dance for All," oil on piña fabric; Fajardo's "Capacity Loaded," oil on canvas; Ignacio's "Sateen Dura-Luxe Risen," mixed media; Paras' pieces in oil on canvas.

In December, the venue hosted a series of performances by the group of painter Ronaldo Ruiz and sculptor Lirio Salvador.

Ignacio is excited about the festival of performance art by the same group and some foreign artists slated in his place this month. Only three months old and already big things are happening.

CHIEF Justice Hilario Davide Jr. and National Commission for Culture and Arts (NCCA) executive director Cecile Guidote Alvarez open "100 Years of Mindanao: A Photographic Journey," an exhibit by the Philippine Center for Photojournalism, Inc., at the Supreme Court lobby. The opening was part of the celebration of the National Arts Month 2005. Also in photo are former senator Heherson Alvarez and former SC associate justice Ameurfina Helencio Herrera.

Baldemor in Jakarta, Impy at Avellana, Kiukok at Finale

VISUAL ARTS

THE ASEAN Women's Circle is presenting the works of Manuel Baldemor at the Exhibition House in Kemang, South Jakarta. "Vibrations" is about Filipino-Balinese folk and ritual festival. The show is for the benefit of the tsunami victims and Filipino victims of the recent typhoons.

THE AVELLANA Gallery (A-19, 2680 F.B. Harrison St., between Edsa Extension and Libertad St. opposite Gideon Academy, Pasay City) opens today the exhibit of new works by Impy Pilapil. The show has a breakfast opening at 9:30 a.m. Call 8338357, 8328365.

RENAISSANCE Gallery (SM Megamall) is presenting the paintings and mixed-media works of freshmen students from the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts until Feb. 23 in the exhibit "FA 11.Z." Participating students under professor-curator Nestor Olarte Vinluan are Jessica Antonio, Kelly Auxilian, Gary Barua, Alvin Brillantes, Gino Bueza, Macarius Capones, Mara Cruz, Mich Dulce, Karl Florendo, Paolo Luis Francisco, Carlo Manalo de Guzman, Darren Huertas, Jin Joson, Amanda P. Legasto, Babeth Lolarga, Rayson Lozada, Dennis Mallari, Jed Nacabuan, Red Nacpil, Aristotle D. Padua, Mara Reyes, Francesca Roces, Michael Vincent Uy, A.S. Valdez Jr. and Sherilyn Vargas. Call 6373101.

MICHAEL P. Conjusta assists in Link, Linkage Ad and PR. Conjusta's "Linkages" shows the rich blending of colors, shapes, and lines. It will be the center of Linkage's 2005 corporate empowerment program.

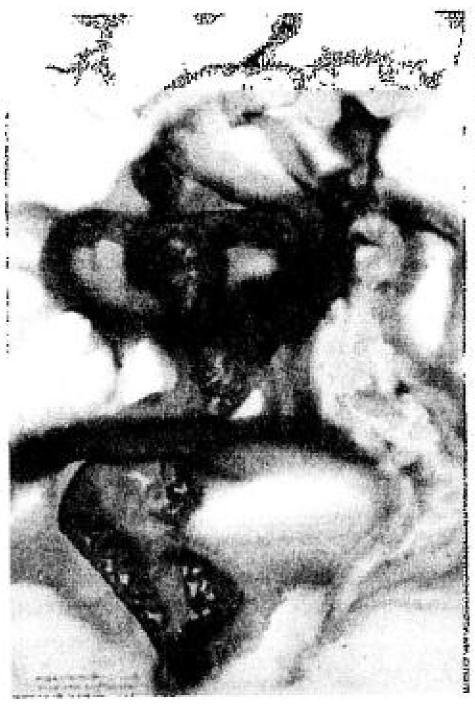
THE CAVITE art group Anting-anting and the Malaysian art group Matahati are featured in a series of interactive paintings and individual canvases at the Pintô Art Gallery (1 Sierra Madre St., Grand Heights, Antipolo City, Rizal) on Feb. 27-Mar. 30.

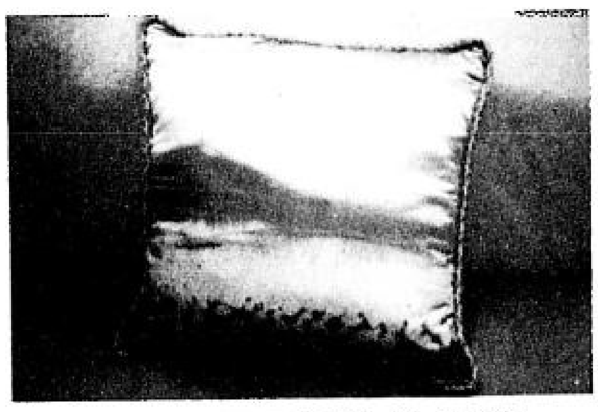
BOSTON Gallery (72 Boston St., Cubao, Quezon City) presents Wilson Ma, Ferdinand Montemayor and Emmanuel Garibay in separate but simultaneous solo shows of recent works on canvas and paper on Feb. 26 to March 19. Call 7229205.

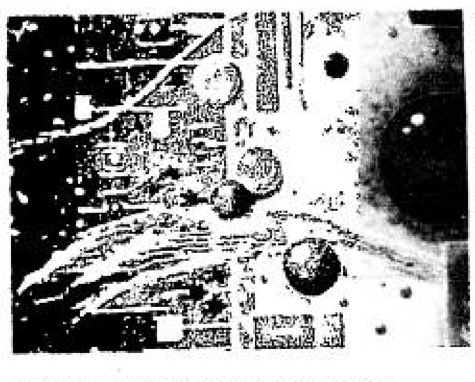
THE DRAWING Room presents Jayson Oliveria's "Attack Painter," until March 12. The exhibit features canvases which have been cut up, slashed, boarded up and bombarded with dubious color schemes. Call 8976990/7877.

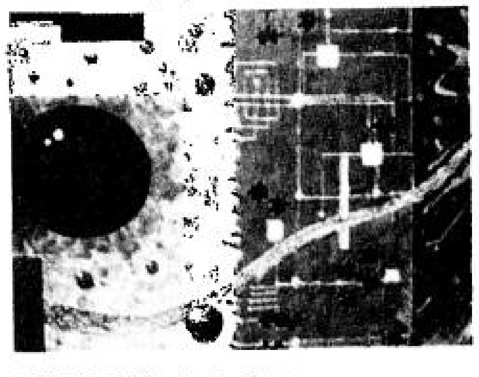
AYALA Museum presents a major exhibit, "Crossings: Philippine Works from the Singapore Art Museum." The exhibit is supported by the Embassy of the Republic of Singapore. Until June 12. Call 7577117/21.

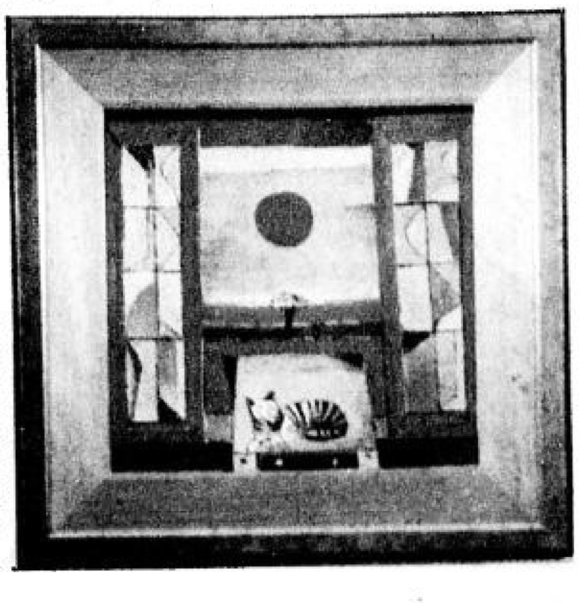
AYALA Museum presents Likhang Sining, an on-the-spot painting competition open to high-school students (12-18 years old) on March 5. Entry forms are available at the Rotary Office or at the Ayala Museum (Makati Avenue and De la Rosa St., Greenbelt Park, Ayala Center, Makati City). Call 7577117, 7533098. Entries may also be submitted through fax at 7573588 or 8451655.


"PURE and Mysterious," by Manuel D. Baldemor


"LUMINESCENCE," by Marivic Rufino


"LINKAGE" 1, by Michael Conjusta


"LINKAGE" 2, by Conjusta


"WINDOW with Cat." Ang Kiukok signature themes including the Passion of Jesus Christ, still life, fisherfolk, clowns, Mother and Child, nudes and vicious animals will be presented in "Kiukok Recent Works 2000-2004" exhibit at the SM Art Center, Feb. 25-March 13.

TELEBABAD MANIA SWEEPS THE COUNTRY

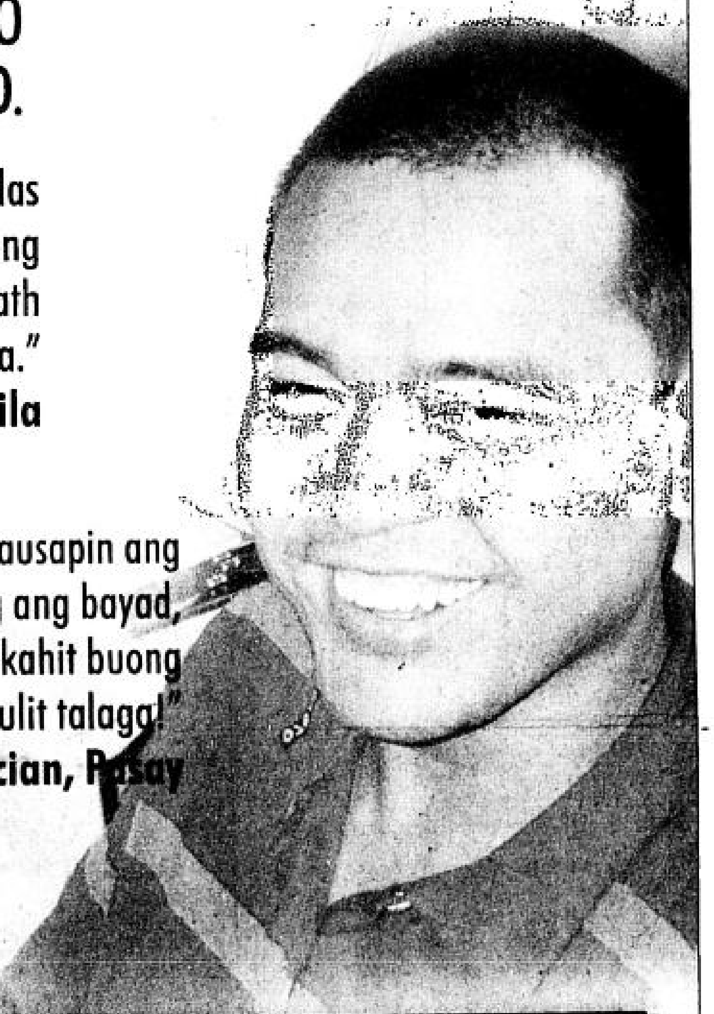
YES ITS TRUE... TOTOONG-TOTOO --- P10.00 PER CALL NDD TELEBABAD.

"There are times na sobrang bored ako dito. All my barkadas are in Pangasinan and I'm the only one working here. Kaya ang laking tipid talaga kasi pwede na kami magchismisan to death and I get to stick to my budget pa."

–Eden Caringal, clerk, Manila

"Sa sampung piso lang, hindi na ako magmamadaling kausapin ang nanay ko sa Ilocos. Di gaya nung dati. Dahil kada tawag ang bayad, kahit kausapin ko mga kapatid ko, mga pamangkin---kahit buong pamilya, sulit talaga!"

–Mark Dee, plant technician, Pasay



A simple call can make a whole world of difference especially if it's as affordable as PLDT's new P10 NDD Telebabad. That's all the more reason to call.

PLDT, the country's largest and most trusted telecommunications company, acknowledges the power of your voice to convey what you think and feel. That's why PLDT lets you get personal with PLDT NDD's unlimited telebabad rate for only P10 per call from February 14 to 28, 2005. The same sulit rate also applies for calls made from PLDT landlines to Smart/Talk N'Text cell phones.

Yes, it's true! At P10, you can actually go on a real telebabad spree with anybody in the country. No hidden fees and no need to apply. Just pure, clear and uninterrupted telebabad.

So pick up the phone now and talk to relatives you never get to see anymore. Relive the good old times with a dear old friend living provinces away. Hear the voice of your loved ones wherever they are. With PLDT's P10 per call nationwide, no matter how long you stay on the line---you are assured to get the most out of each call you make.

PLDT

Iba Pa Rin Ang May PLDT Landline.

Here are some of the countless PLDT subscribers who continue to reap the tremendous benefits of PLDT's P10 nationwide telebabad offering.

"I hardly see my ate kasi she s always busy with her job. Eh ngayon, P10 na lang each call sa Smart cell phone niya so kahit magpaturo pa ako ng assignment sa kanya over the landline, pwede."

—Patrick Salaria, student, Batangas

"This was the first Valentines Day my boyfriend and I had to spend apart when he left for Cebu. Buti na lang, PLDT's P10 per call launched on Feb. 14 so nag date na lang kami over the phone."

–Hazel Flores, teller, Antipolo

"I really miss my two kids studying in Manila so iba talaga pag marinig ko ang boses nila. Before, I just text them. Now, I can listen to them longer and hear all their stories. I also worry less because I can hear it in their voices that they're okay."

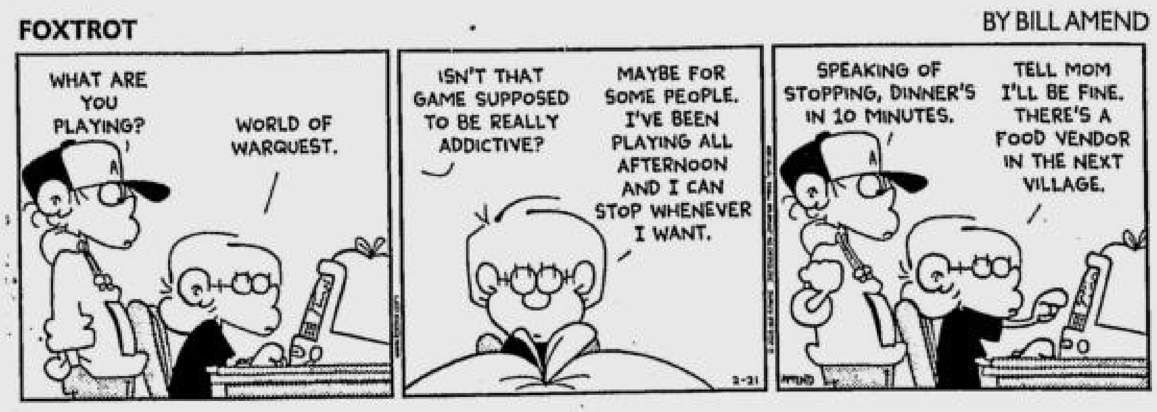
– Jocelyn Laurilla, mom, Zamboanga

for more information CALL 171

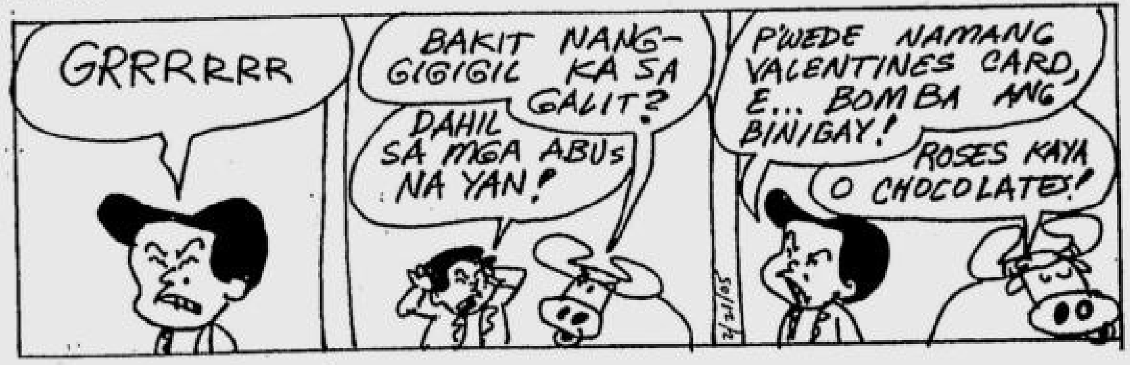
PLDT NDD's P10 per call nationwide is also open to subscribers of PILTEL, CLARKTEL, SUBICTEL, MARATEL and participating PAPTELCOs. To know more about this, you may visit your respective PLDT Business Office or your local PAPTELCO operator.

Abangan!

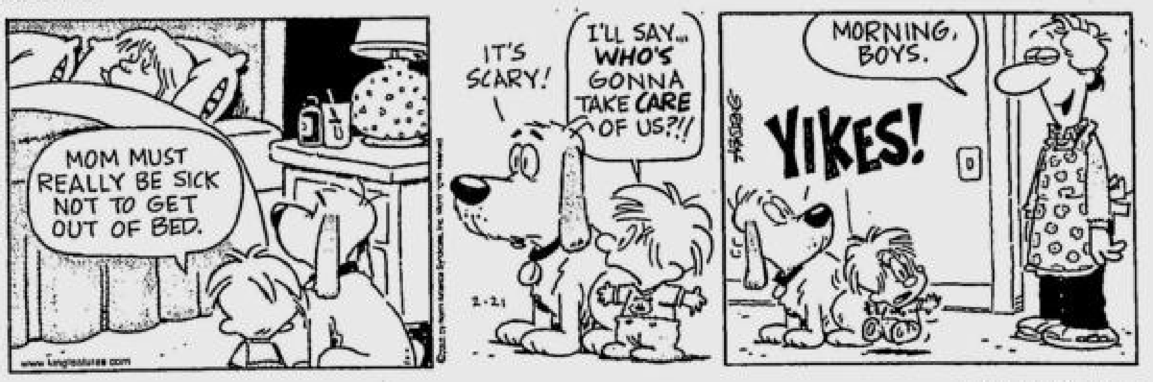
FOXTROT
BY BILL AMEND


WHAT ARE YOU PLAYING?
WORLD OF WARQUEST.
ISN'T THAT GAME SUPPOSED TO BE REALLY ADDICTIVE?
MAYBE FOR SOME PEOPLE. I'VE BEEN PLAYING ALL AFTERNOON AND I CAN STOP WHENEVER I WANT.
SPEAKING OF STOPPING, DINNER'S IN 10 MINUTES.
TELL MOM I'LL BE FINE. THERE'S A FOOD VENDOR IN THE NEXT VILLAGE.
2-21

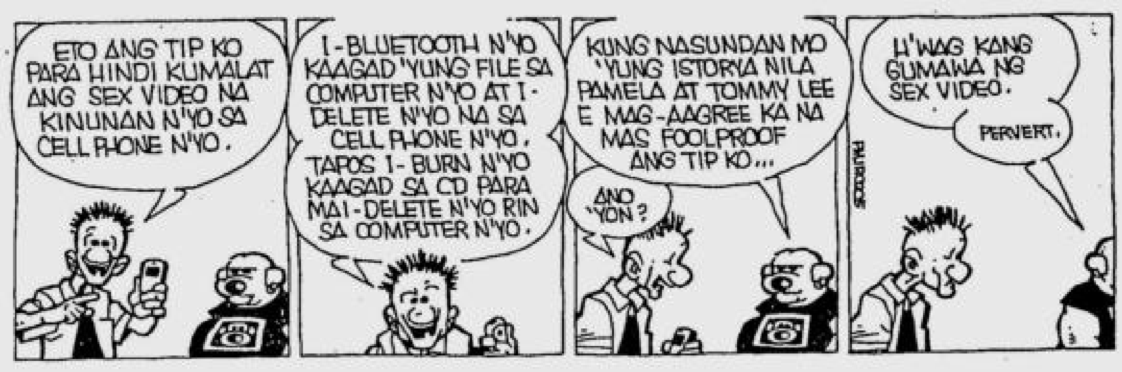
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA


GRRRRRR
BAKIT NANG-GIGIGIL KA SA GALIT?
DAHIL SA MGA ABUs NA YAN!
P'WEDE NAMANG VALENTINES CARD, E... BOMBA ANG BINIGAY!
ROSES KAYA O CHOCOLATES!

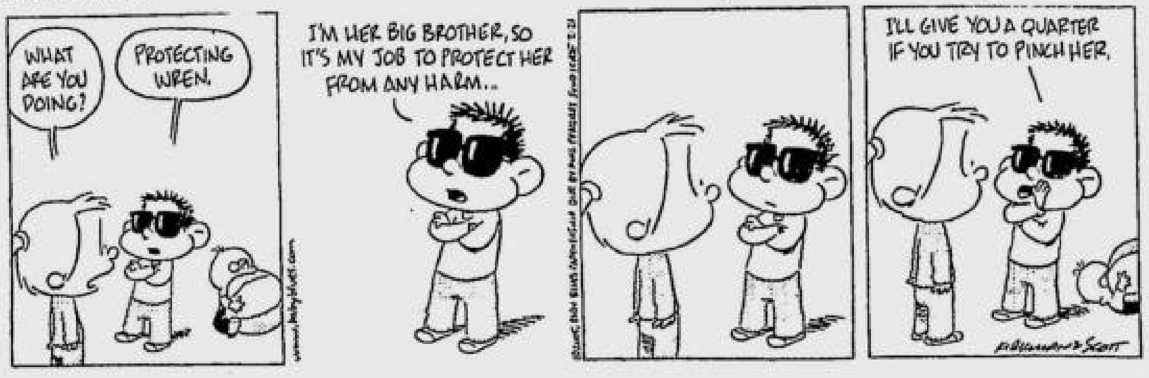
MARVIN
BY TOM ARMSTRONG


MOM MUST REALLY BE SICK NOT TO GET OUT OF BED.
IT'S SCARY!
I'LL SAY... WHO'S GONNA TAKE CARE OF US?!!
YIKES!
MORNING, BOYS.
2-21
www.kingfeatures.com

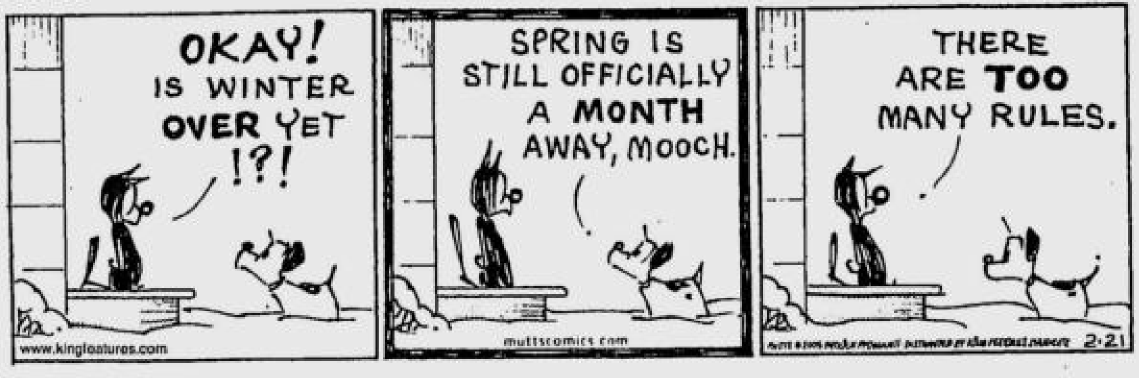
PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR


ETO ANG TIP KO PARA HINDI KUMALAT ANG SEX VIDEO NA KINUNAN N'YO SA CELL PHONE N'YO.
I-BLUETOOTH N'YO KAAGAD 'YUNG FILE SA COMPUTER N'YO AT I-DELETE N'YO NA SA CELL PHONE N'YO. TAPOS I-BURN N'YO KAAGAD SA CD PARA MAI-DELETE N'YO RIN SA COMPUTER N'YO.
KUNG NASUNDAN MO 'YUNG ISTORYA NILA PAMELA AT TOMMY LEE E MAG-AAGREE KA NA MAS FOOLPROOF ANG TIP KO...
ANO 'YON?
H'WAG KANG GUMAWA NG SEX VIDEO.
PERVERT.

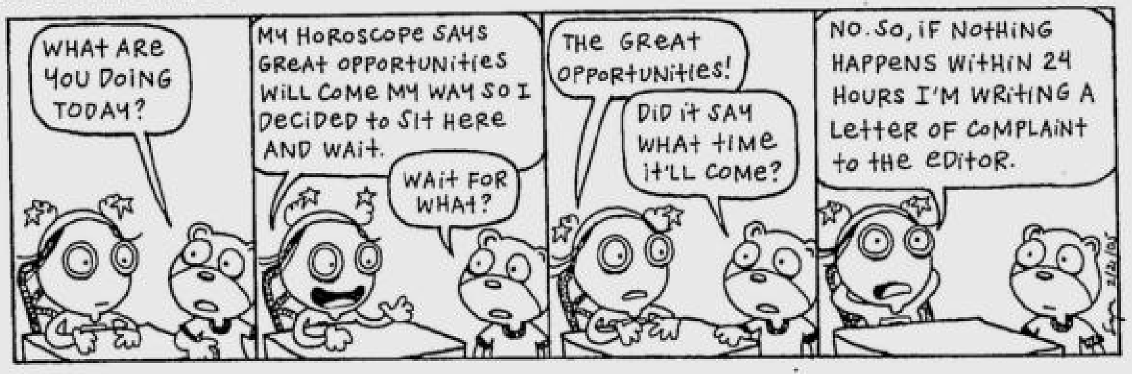
BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
PROTECTING WREN.
I'M HER BIG BROTHER, SO IT'S MY JOB TO PROTECT HER FROM ANY HARM...
I'LL GIVE YOU A QUARTER IF YOU TRY TO PINCH HER.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

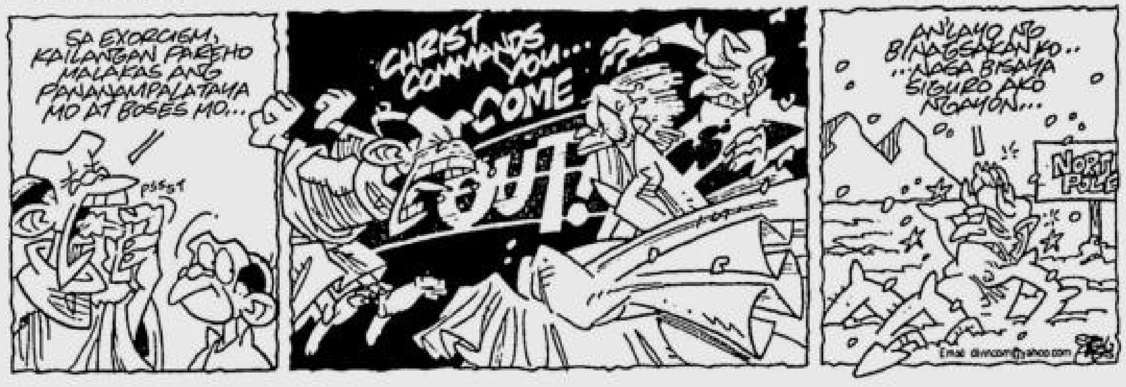
MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


OKAY! IS WINTER OVER YET !?!
SPRING IS STILL OFFICIALLY A MONTH AWAY, MOOCH.
THERE ARE TOO MANY RULES.
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
2-21

ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WHAT ARE YOU DOING TODAY?
MY HOROSCOPE SAYS GREAT OPPORTUNITIES WILL COME MY WAY SO I DECIDED TO SIT HERE AND WAIT.
WAIT FOR WHAT?
THE GREAT OPPORTUNITIES!
DID IT SAY WHAT TIME IT'LL COME?
NO. SO, IF NOTHING HAPPENS WITHIN 24 HOURS I'M WRITING A LETTER OF COMPLAINT TO THE EDITOR.

DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


SA EXORCISM, KAILANGAN PAREHO MALAKAS ANG PANANAMPALATAYA MO AT BOSES MO...
PSSST
CHRIST COMMANDS YOU... COME OUT!
AN'LAYO NG BINAGSAKAN KO.. ..NASA BISAYA SIGURO AKO NGAYON...
NORT POLE

HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are often careful and self-contained. Without even trying, you attract others to you. You like fun, and you have a keen perception of things. Your critical abilities are excellent. It's wise to monitor your finances. Use your own independence as a positive role model for others. An important choice awaits you this year. Choose wisely.
Birthdate of: Charlotte Church, singer; Tyne Daly, actress; Alan Rickman, actor.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19): This is a very passionate day. But it's passionate in a positive way. Discussions with friends and groups will be lively, dynamic and memorable!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a wonderful day to talk to your boss to see if you can get your way about anything. You're persuasive and charming. Who can resist you?

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is an excellent day for business regarding publishing, the media, libraries, higher education, travel and dealing with foreign countries. You can get a lot done !

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Today is the day to collect debts. Go after whatever anyone else owes you. You can make things materialize as if you were a magician pulling a rabbit out of a hat..

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is the kind of day when friends can become lovers, and lovers can become friends. Relations with others are passionate. Good day to smooth over troubled waters.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You're very powerful at work today. Whatever you do will improve things or make things run better. Co-workers are very supportive. (Would that every day were this easy.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Ooo la la! This is the day for romance and love. You feel passionate and desirable. You also feel very creative and artistic. Enjoy your day!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You can make wonderful creative improvements to where you live today. Buy things for your home; fix things that need repairing. Family relationships are excellent today.

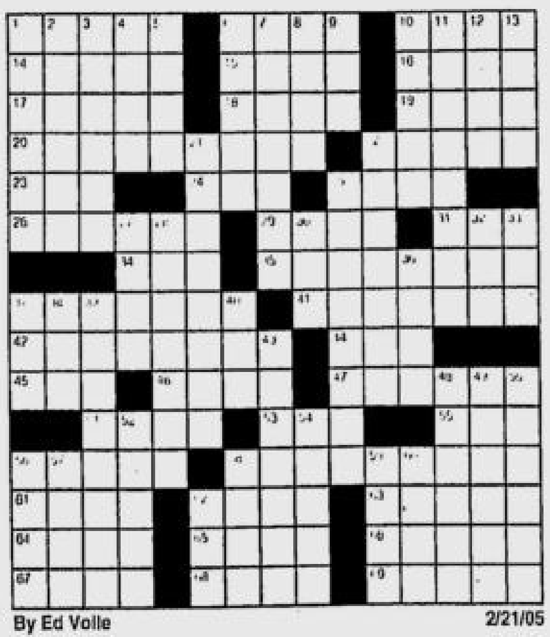
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): It's as if you kissed the Blarney Stone today. You can talk anyone into anything! Sales, marketing, teaching, writing and all forms of communication are successful! Time spent with siblings is good.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is an excellent day for business and commerce. You can make great strides in making money or boosting your income.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is a fabulous day to make any kind of improvement to your appearance or your wardrobe. Similarly, you can improve your closest relationships with others as well.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You are deeply intuitive. Today you are very much in touch with this inner world. You sense what goes on behind the scenes everywhere you look. In the same way, you can sense what others are thinking and feeling.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Ed Voile
Gillette, WY
2/21/05

ACROSS
1 Anorak
6 Largest continent
10 Amscray!
14 Man the tiller
15 Left
16 __ Stanley Gardner
17 Actress Woodard
18 Confront
19 Horn sound
20 First Lady
22 Chops very fine
23 NYC arena
24 Samuel's teacher
25 Bathroom fixture
26 Spirited mounts
29 Rotating parts
31 Flow back
34 Illuminated
35 1883 exploding volcano
37 With 41A, former First Lady
41 See 37A
42 Frozen expanse
44 Spy novelist Deighton
45 __ Na Na
46 Not at home
47 Pencil end
51 Bowling targets
53 Mas' men
55 Greek letter
56 Errol of Hollywood
58 First Lady (1974-77)
61 "__ von der Erde"
62 Freight-car freeloader
63 Without help
64 Actor Sharif
65 Zeal
66 Olympic sleds
67 Actress Gilpin
68 Nothing more than
69 Critic Roger

DOWN
1 David's poetry
2 Finally
3 Safe harbor
4 Deborah of movies
5 Length times width
6 Dreadful
7 Nautically nauseous
8 Length unit
9 Picnicked
10 Become established
11 Alamo casualty
12 __ vera
13 Vietnamese holidays
21 Spreads about
22 More chancy
25 Superlatively wee
27 Pipe turns
28 Entertainer Carroll
30 Trajectory's shape
32 Scare word
33 Forbid
36 "Blessings" author Quindlen
37 HMS part
38 "__ bin ein Berliner"
39 Quadrennial event
40 Roll-call vote
43 Printer's piece
48 Curly or Moe
49 Breadwinner
50 Most ill-bred
52 Arboreal lemur
54 Make amends
56 Failure
57 Citrus fruit
58 Tree trunk
59 Harvard rival
60 Misplay
62 Cloth border

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

S	L	O	B	B	E	R	■	S	C	H	I	S	M	S
P	A	P	I	L	L	A	■	P	H	A	R	A	O	H
O	U	T	L	E	A	P	■	R	E	G	A	L	I	A
O	R	I	G	A	M	I	■	A	M	A	T	O	R	Y
F	A	C	E	T	■	N	A	Y	■	R	E	N	T	S
■	■	■	■	■	M	E	R	C	E	■	■	■	■	■
G	U	Y	A	N	A	■	M	A	R	T	I	N	A	S
E	G	O	T	I	S	M	■	N	A	I	R	O	B	I
T	H	U	M	B	S	U	P	■	S	E	A	T	E	R
■	■	■	■	■	E	L	O	P	E	■	■	■	■	■
A	G	L	O	W	■	B	E	E	■	F	O	S	S	A
B	R	O	M	I	D	E	■	S	L	A	T	H	E	R
Y	O	D	E	L	E	R	■	T	O	R	T	O	N	I
S	P	E	N	C	E	R	■	L	U	C	E	R	N	E
S	E	N	S	O	R	Y	■	E	T	E	R	N	A	L

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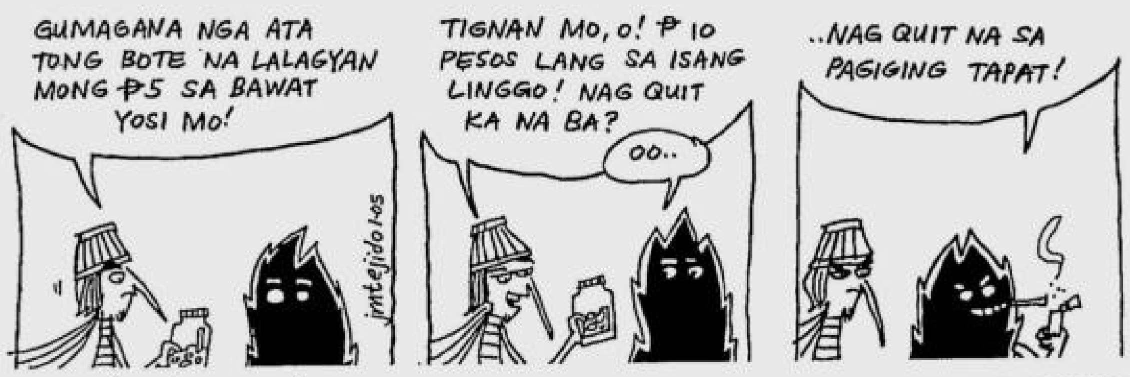
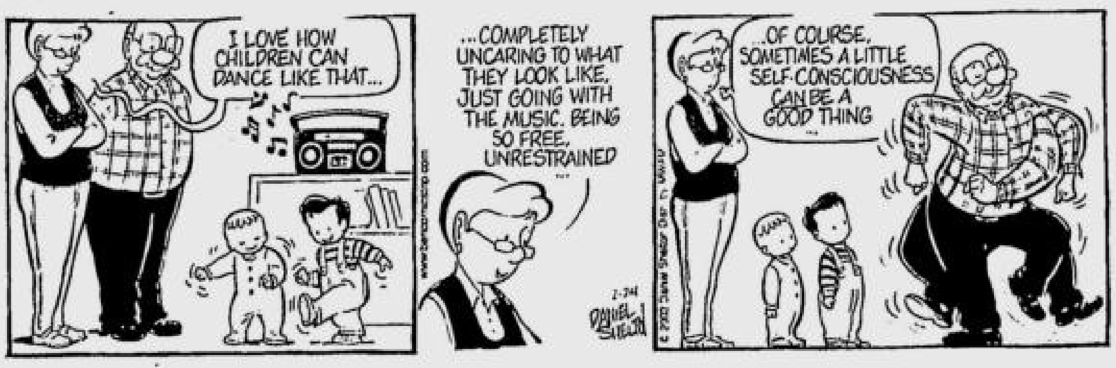
2/21/05

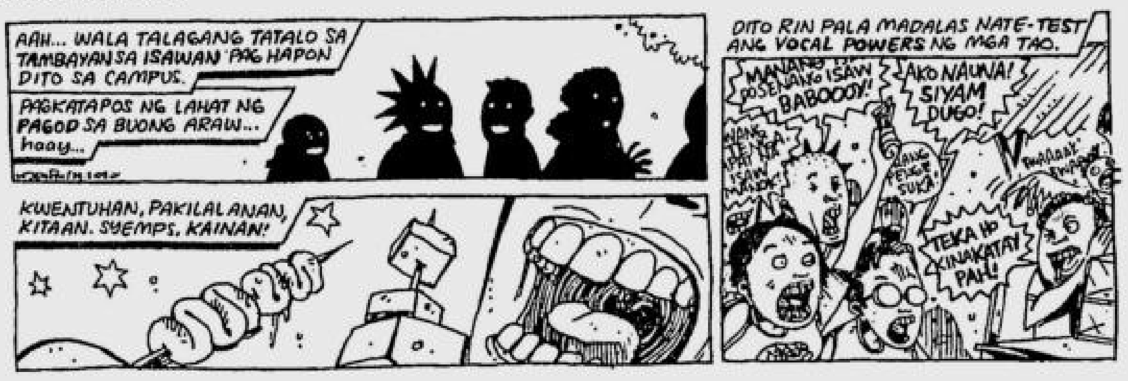
MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


GUMAGANA NGA ATA TONG BOTE NA LALAGYAN MONG ₱5 SA BAWAT YOSI MO!
TIGNAN MO, O! ₱10 PESOS LANG SA ISANG LINGGO! NAG QUIT KA NA BA?
OO..
..NAG QUIT NA SA PAGIGING TAPAT!
jmtejido 1-05

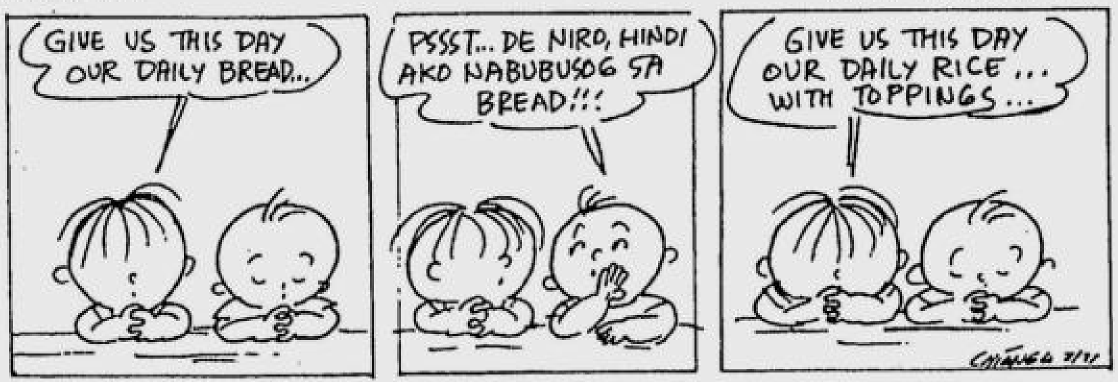
BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON


I LOVE HOW CHILDREN CAN DANCE LIKE THAT...
...COMPLETELY UNCARING TO WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE, JUST GOING WITH THE MUSIC. BEING SO FREE, UNRESTRAINED
...OF COURSE, SOMETIMES A LITTLE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS CAN BE A GOOD THING
DANIEL SHELTON

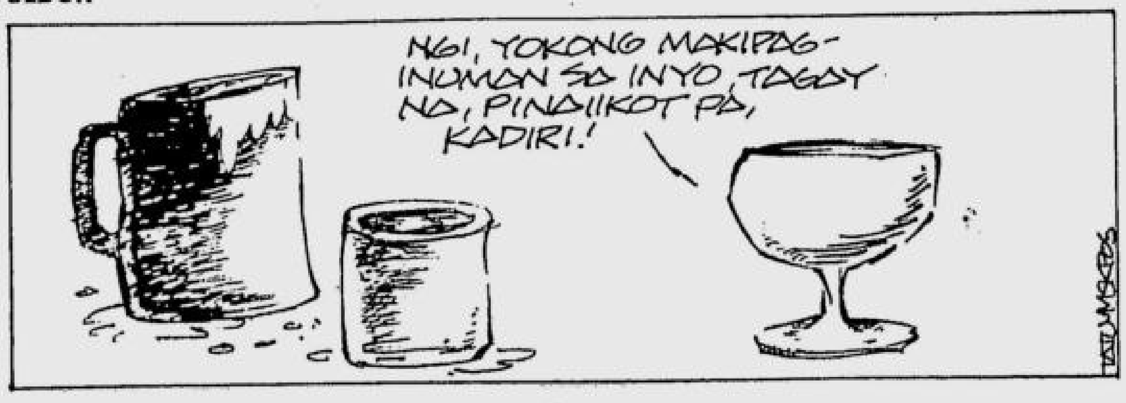
KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA


AAH... WALA TALAGANG TATALO SA TAMBAYAN SA ISAWAN 'PAG HAPON DITO SA CAMPUS.
PAGKATAPOS NG LAHAT NG PAGOD SA BUONG ARAW... haay...
KWENTUHAN, PAKILALANAN, KITAAN. SYEMPS. KAINAN!
DITO RIN PALA MADALAS NATE-TEST ANG VOCAL POWERS NG MGA TAO.
BABOOOY!
AKO NAUNA! SIYAM DUGO!
TEKA HO KINAKATAY PA!!

LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD...
PSSST... DE NIRO, HINDI AKO NABUBUSOG SA BREAD!!!
GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY RICE ... WITH TOPPINGS ...

TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


NGI, YOKONG MAKIPAG-INUMAN SA INYO, TAGAY NA, PINAIIKOT PA, KADIRI!

Room of spirits

By Ian Rosales Casocot
PDI Visayas Bureau

HIDDEN somewhere in a Mexican restaurant called CocoAmigos—located along the northern stretch of Dumaguete City's famous Boulevard—is an adobe-brown dining room, which is increasingly becoming the most important space for art in this city down south, in Negros Oriental.

Here, a kind of awakening is stirring what had always been a vibrant, although surprisingly low-key, community of artists.

The city had always boasted of artists of impressive rank, with equally impressive voices: Kitty Taniguchi and her Babylonic female abandon, for example, and daughter Maria Taniguchi's prophetic reach.

In their wake come two more names in Dumaguete art that may command considerable attention in the years to come.

In an exhibit aptly called "Waves of Worship," artists Susan Canoy and Sharon Dadang-Rafols have finally come into their own, their artistic voices full-bodied in an exhibit that celebrates spirituality in manifestations of outward worship, or inward angst.

Marked departure

Canoy's work—composed mostly of acrylic paintings on antique narra wood—is a marked departure from the diwata and sirena motifs that had characterized her early paintings, not always done successfully.

But in these new works, she has achieved that ambitious reach to people her canvas with folkloric elements, and render them with intensity and meaning.

This time around, she takes on the celebratory nature of Filipino religiosity and mounts them in the form of calendar dials, each canvas reminiscent of those typical framed installations of kris swords and ancient shields that used to grace many Filipino homes.

Set on black tablets, stylized wood panels, accented on the sides with decorative metal door handles that seem to suggest a welcome to varieties of rituals, are rendered with scenes from the Catholic festivals of saints. All are done in Amorsolo charm, the acrylic finish marking a vibrant quality.

Canoy devotes one work to each month of the year, a dial in the center indicating the various festivities set in that month, then highlighting the one celebration that defines the days.

For January, there is "Inahan sa Kanunayang Panabang," the top showing a scene of a young man playing guitar in the middle of a vast rice field, and the bottom with vintas in the horizon.

For October, the artist celebrates the Oriental Negrense Buglasan tradition in "Pagsaulog," with Dumaguete's Boulevard rendered in festive colors on the top, and the provincial capitol on the bottom in an energy of people dancing to the Buglasan beat.

More introspective

But while Canoy's works celebrate the visible and often theatrical rites to commemorate our everyday spirituality, Dadang-Rafols' works suggest a more introspective tone of worship, maybe even internal struggles of faith.

Hers is a work of miniature tension. The paintings—or a set of small ones presented mostly as triptychs—are outer expressions of inner peace and inner rage, canvases of white with strokes of color, foreboding and meditation, set against a backdrop of blackness.

They are almost like Rorschach ink blot tests, and sometimes what is hidden in the chaos of color are startling forms that resemble phantom faces (done to the most haunting degree in the "Entreaty" triptych), throbbing veins, and palimpsests of forbidden landscapes.

The "Zen Series" is a simple exercise of Chinese watercolor ink on paper, in a kind of pulled string effect that reaches beyond that. They provide windows. To what? To inner wildness, and to eventual calm?

"Vision" and "Gamut" are portraits, perhaps, of the recesses of our inner anatomies, at once organic and ominous. "My Prayer," on the other hand, is a tornado of red and sunsets of green, obliquely revealing a haunting woman's face.

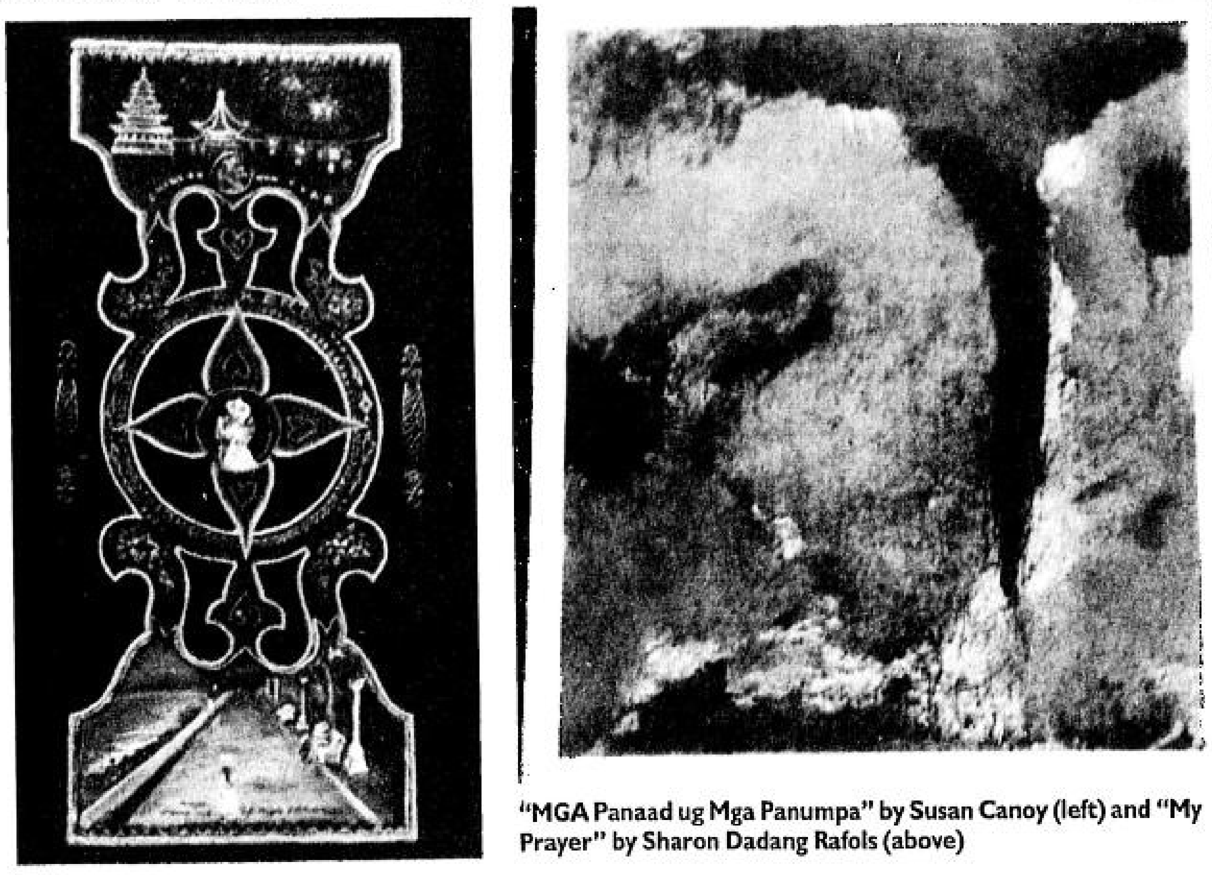
"Our Kibbutz" is a set of five panels that approximate a rough sequence of waves and blots simulating fireworks and lava lamps, to end, like the other painting, to a portrait of sorts of a smudged-up woman.

"The Works" is a splatter of red simulating palm trees in a nuclear sunset, a theme which bleeds to "Breathe," which shows a stark landscape of barren tree shadows and ruined buildings, all shrouded in purple decadence.

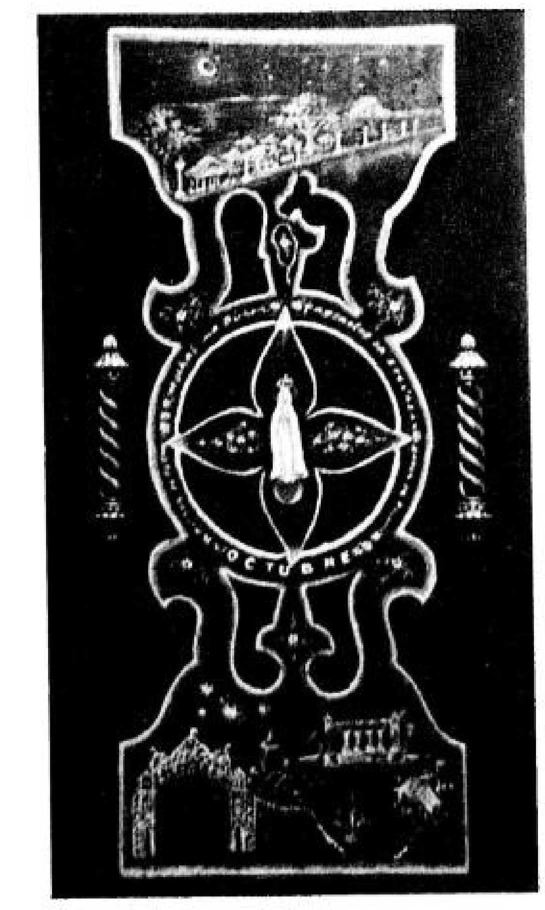
Two women with singular views on viewing the numinous, reflecting our individual responses to the ethereal, the ritualistic, and the meditative.

In that adobe room in that restaurant, the spirits loom, bursting out of the canvases and finally into our lives.

The exhibit runs until Feb. 24 in CocoAmigos, Rizal Boulevard, Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental.



"MGA Panaad ug Mga Panumpa" by Susan Canoy (left) and "My Prayer" by Sharon Dadang Rafols (above)

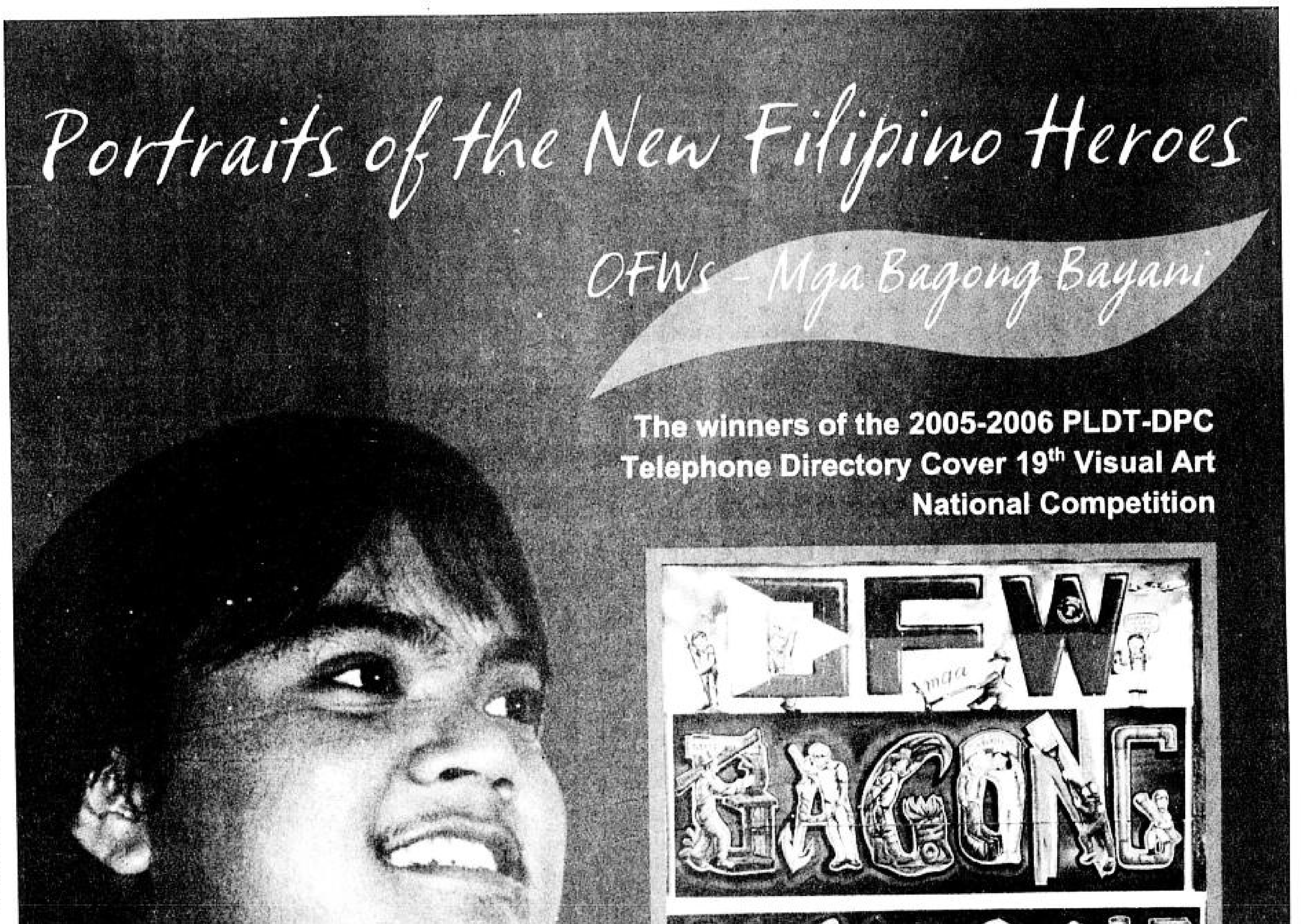


"PAGSAULOG" by Canoy

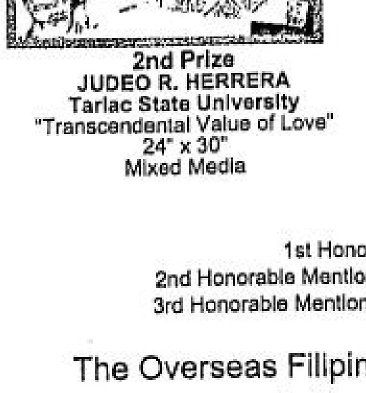
Portraits of the New Filipino Heroes

OFWs - Mga Bagong Bayani

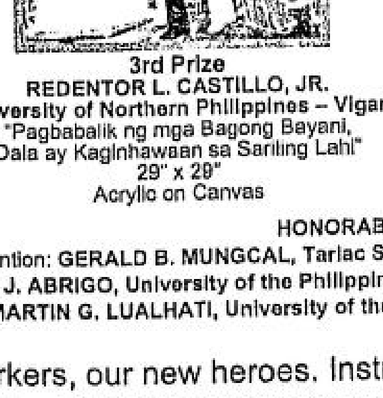
The winners of the 2005-2006 PLDT-DPC Telephone Directory Cover 19th Visual Art National Competition



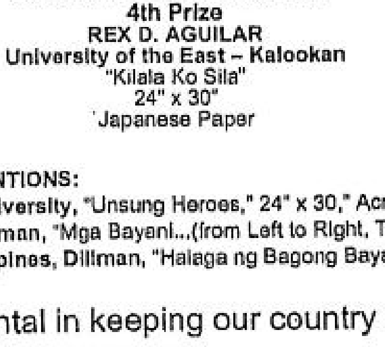
GRAND PRIZE
JERMAINE W. ALVAREZ
Far Eastern University
"Manggagawang Pinoy: Pinagbuklod ng Iisang Layunin, kaya't Tawagin Natin Silang mga Bagong Bayani"
29" x 29"
Acrylic on Wood



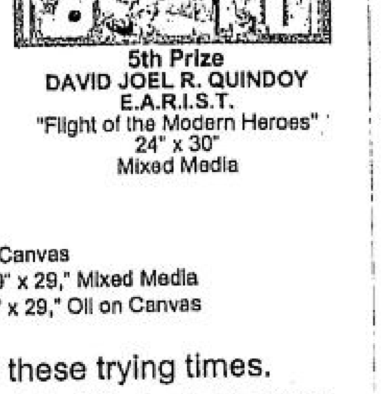
2nd Prize
JUDEO R. HERRERA
Tarlac State University
"Transcendental Value of Love"
24" x 30"
Mixed Media



3rd Prize
REDENTOR L. CASTILLO, JR.
University of Northern Philippines – Vigan
"Pagbabalik ng mga Bagong Bayani,
Dala ay Kaginhawaan sa Sariling Lahi"
29" x 29"
Acrylic on Canvas



4th Prize
REX D. AGUILAR
University of the East – Kalookan
"Kilala Ko Sila"
24" x 30"
Japanese Paper



5th Prize
DAVID JOEL R. QUINDOY
E.A.R.I.S.T.
"Flight of the Modern Heroes"
24" x 30"
Mixed Media

HONORABLE MENTIONS:
1st Honorable Mention: GERALD B. MUNGCAL, Tarlac State University, "Unsung Heroes," 24" x 30," Acrylic on Canvas
2nd Honorable Mention: BUEN J. ABRIGO, University of the Philippines, Diliman, "Mga Bayani...(from Left to Right, Top)," 29" x 29," Mixed Media
3rd Honorable Mention: HARI MARTIN G. LUALHATI, University of the Philippines, Diliman, "Halaga ng Bagong Bayani," 29" x 29," Oil on Canvas

The Overseas Filipino Workers, our new heroes. Instrumental in keeping our country up in these trying times. They are this year's theme for the PLDT-DPC 19th Visual Art National Competition as interpreted by 64 student artists from around the country, with five emerging as the top winners. Their winning masterpieces will be featured on the covers of the 2005-2006 PLDT-DPC Telephone Directories.

The entries will be on exhibit at the National Museum, Ground Floor, Museum of the Filipino People, Agrifina Circle, Rizal Park, Manila from February 3 to 27, 2005, Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 am to 4 pm.

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Ancient Santo Niño icon stolen

From page C1

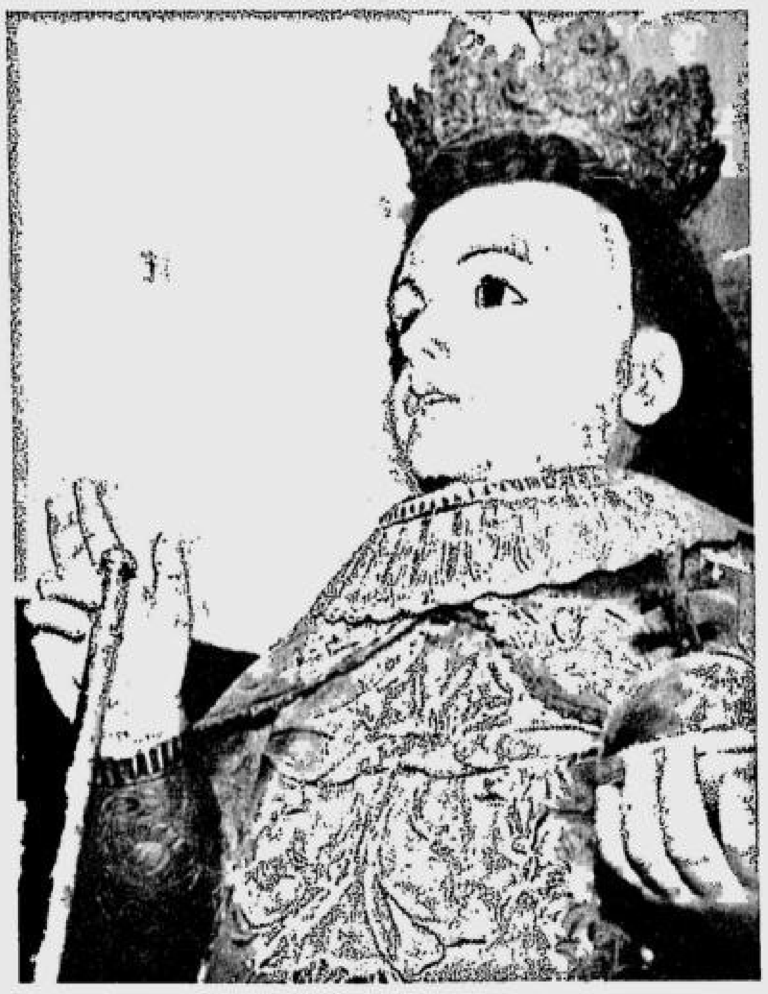
fore arriving at the finish line in the shadow of the Global City skyscrapers.

The marathon passes riverbanks and crosses bridges but keeps in close contact with the Pasig River to remind us that the river is the forgotten center of Manileño life and it desperately needs our help.

In reality, the marathon brings many aspects of Filipino life to the forefront, connecting the environment, its principal focus, to history, heritage conservation, culture, tourism and sports. The event ties it all together, so "figure that out," challenged the organizer.

The marathon's "Survival Handbook" does the figuring out for me. Since I have no running ambitions, the handbook is what attracts me to the marathon.

MARATHON runners on the Makati-Mandaluyong Bridge advocate the survival of Manila's Pasig River during the annual International Philippine Marathon for the Pasig River.



HERITAGE WATCH. The ivory head and hands of the Santo Niño statue were stolen from the main altar of the Santo Niño Church in Bugasong, Antique, on Jan. 30. The items have not been recovered and the thieves are still at large.

The handbook tells me that the PMPR course is unique. "While marathons adopt an out-and-back method, this one is a point-to-point running event," it says. Its course follows the Pasig riverbanks, crosses 11 of the 13 bridges traversing the river in addition to going across the bridge over the San Juan River, a Pasig tributary.

Drawing attention to the waters of the Pasig, the marathon drives home the point that the river needs help from everyone but the run also acknowledges the need to preserve heritage as it passes historic landmarks and edifices, enters small riverside communities, navigates through narrow side streets and wide avenues.

At Km 00, the Marathon starts at the Plaza de Roma in front of the Manila Cathedral, heads towards Del Pan Bridge (Km 01) passing the Fort Santiago wall beside River Park, a park developed by the Clean and Green Foundation, which also refurbished the bridges over the Pasig as its contribution to the Philippine Centennial celebration in 1998. The structures deteriorated after they were turned over to the City of Manila for "non-maintenance." That is another story.

Back to the run, from Muelle de la Industria (Km 02) on the north bank of the Pasig, the view of Fort Santiago and Intramuros is superb. The run passes El Hogar Building, a decaying but still elegant pre-World War II structure on the Pasig quay. From there the route crosses the river once again on Jones Bridge, heading towards Taft Avenue and the demolished Jai Alai Building.

The handbook points out places of interest along the route. Giving both historical data and trivia, it states that Sta Cruz Church (Km 06) was built by the Jesuits in 1768, and then says that San Beda College on Mendiola Street (Km 11) is just about the last all-male college in the country.

Lamayan Street in Santa Ana (Km 21) was once part of the old kingdom of Namayan where Raja Sulayman retreated when the Spanish chased him. Crossing Lambingan Bridge into Mandaluyong, factories block the view of the river from the marathon route until it returns on Coronado St. (Km 24) that approaches the Makati-Mandaluyong Bridge (Km 25), one of the Centennial Bridges refurbished by the Clean and Green Foundation (the redesigned lines and refined color scheme of the bridge had been too minimal, prompting authorities to tart up the structure to suit government taste).

The last view of the Pasig is from the Carlos P. Garcia C-5 Bridge (Km 31) where "to your left is the Napindan Floodway and to its left is the stately old Rizal Provincial Capitol before it moved to its present site on Shaw Boulevard."

It's a pleasant view I always look forward to seeing—ruins standing on a bluff at the bend of the Pasig, probably one of the last grand urban vistas left in Manila. It breaks the monotony of C5 and the wall of menacing roadside billboards that are pure urban blight.

"The last long stretch will test your perseverance and patience," warns the handbook when the route runs on C5 highway (Km 32-37), entering the Fort Bonifacio area to end at the Finish Line (Km 42) where you must "please make sure that your finishing time is properly recorded."

The 1st International Philippine Marathon for the Pasig River is a full 42-km marathon envisioned to someday compare with the New York, Boston and London in-city marathons. It hopes to attract strong foreign participation in the future.

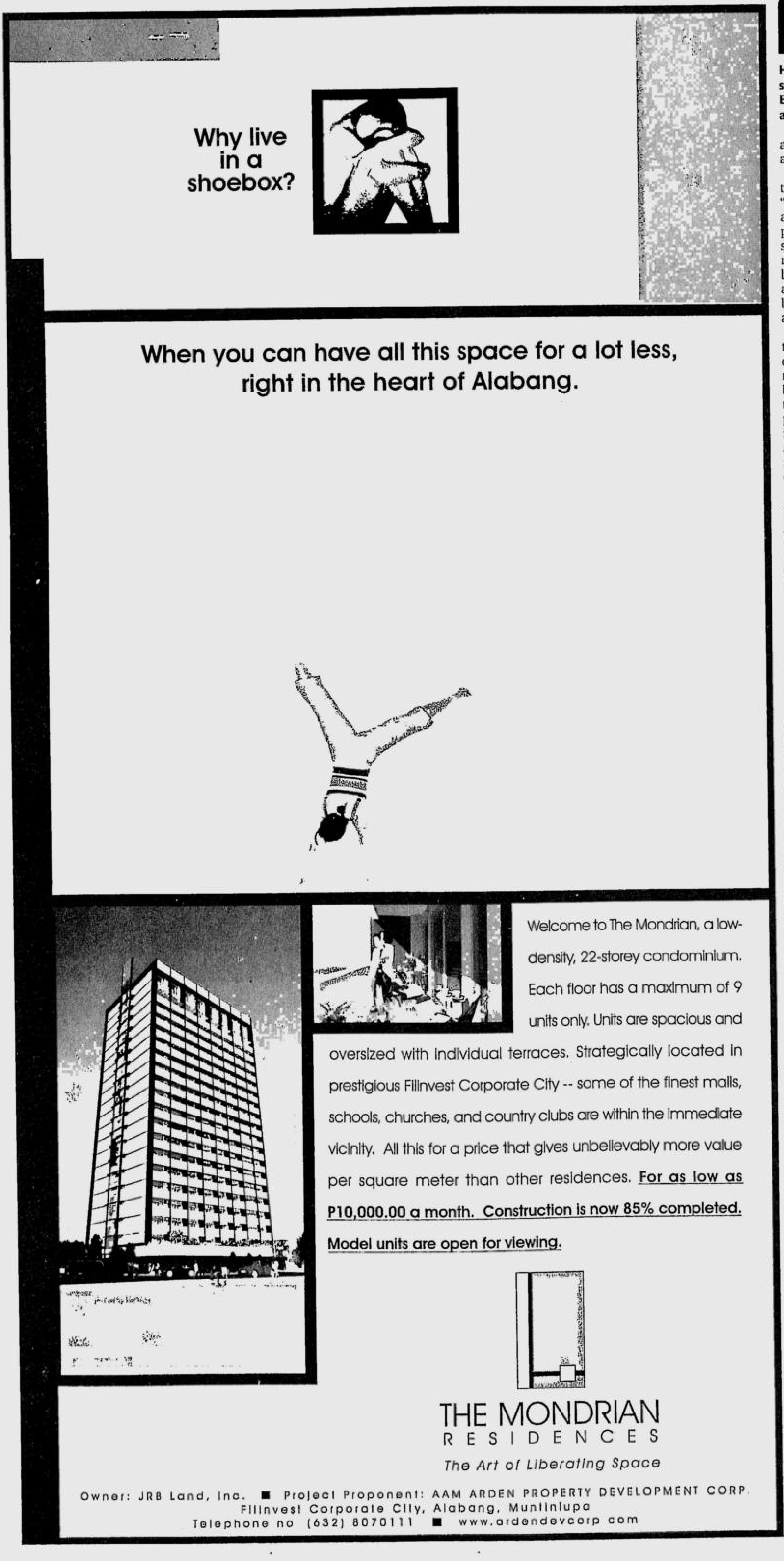
For those with less stamina, there also are 10-, 5-, and 3-km runs around Fort Bonifacio, but the 3km run is limited to ages 13 and below.

For information on the 1st International Philippine Marathon for the Pasig River, contact the Clean and Green Foundation or the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission at 5276378/79.

If running through Manila isn't your thing, get a copy of the Marathon's Survival Handbook.

Perhaps the organizers could think of publishing an expanded version.

E-mail feedback to afvillalon@hotmail.com



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Seminar on how to put up a church museum

THE MANILA Archdiocesan Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church (MACC) of the Archdiocese of Manila will hold a seminar on today at the Beato Angelico Building of the University of Santo Tomas, España, Manila.

The seminar, titled "Introduction to Setting Up an Ecclesiastical Museum," aims to promote awareness of and foster education on church cultural heritage as instruments of evangelization.

The seminar will discuss the nature of an ecclesiastical museum, museum management, organization and exhibit basic, and general classification and cataloguing of ecclesiastical materials.

The speakers from the field of museology are Fr. Isidro C. Abaño, O.P., chair of the MACC's Sub-Committee on Museums and director of the UST Museum of Arts and Sciences; Elenita Alba of the National Museum's education division; and Prof. Regalado Trota José, chair of the MACC's Sub-Committee on Church Monuments and Religious Structures and a faculty member of the UST Graduate School's Cultural Heritage Studies program.

Call 5245062, 5228132 and 5277631, or e-mail macc@aam-rcam.org or archives@pacific.net.ph.

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Pelikula at Lipunan fetes FPJ, British animation

CARRYING the theme, "Cinema and Memory," the 12th edition of the annual "Pelikula at Lipunan," presented by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts in cooperation with the Mowelfund Film Institute (the movie workers' security fund), will pay tribute to the King of Philippine Movies—Fernando Poe Jr.

Starting Feb. 23, a retrospective will present FPJ's most memorable movies. The late actor relives his iconic portrayal of the Filipino Everyman in "Aguila" (Famas Best Picture, 1980)." He teams up with his sweetheart Susan Roces in the epic, "Perlas ng Silangan" (1969). The festival will also show his other

PELIKULA/ D3

The
TAMA NG
CINEMA

ONE of FPJ's last public acts was to open the Tama Ng screening room at Mowelfund.

FERNANDO Poe Jr. with Paeng Nepomuceno, Laurice Guillen and Susan Roces at the opening of Mowelfund's Bulwagang Nepomuceno

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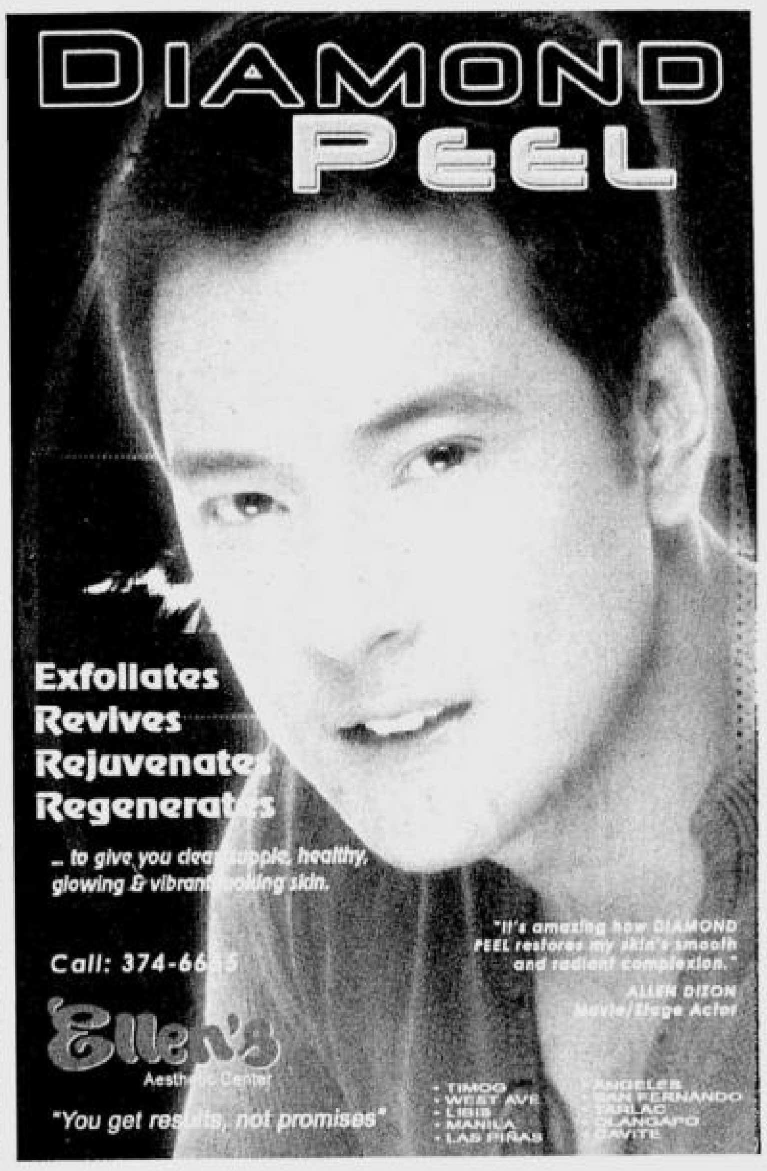
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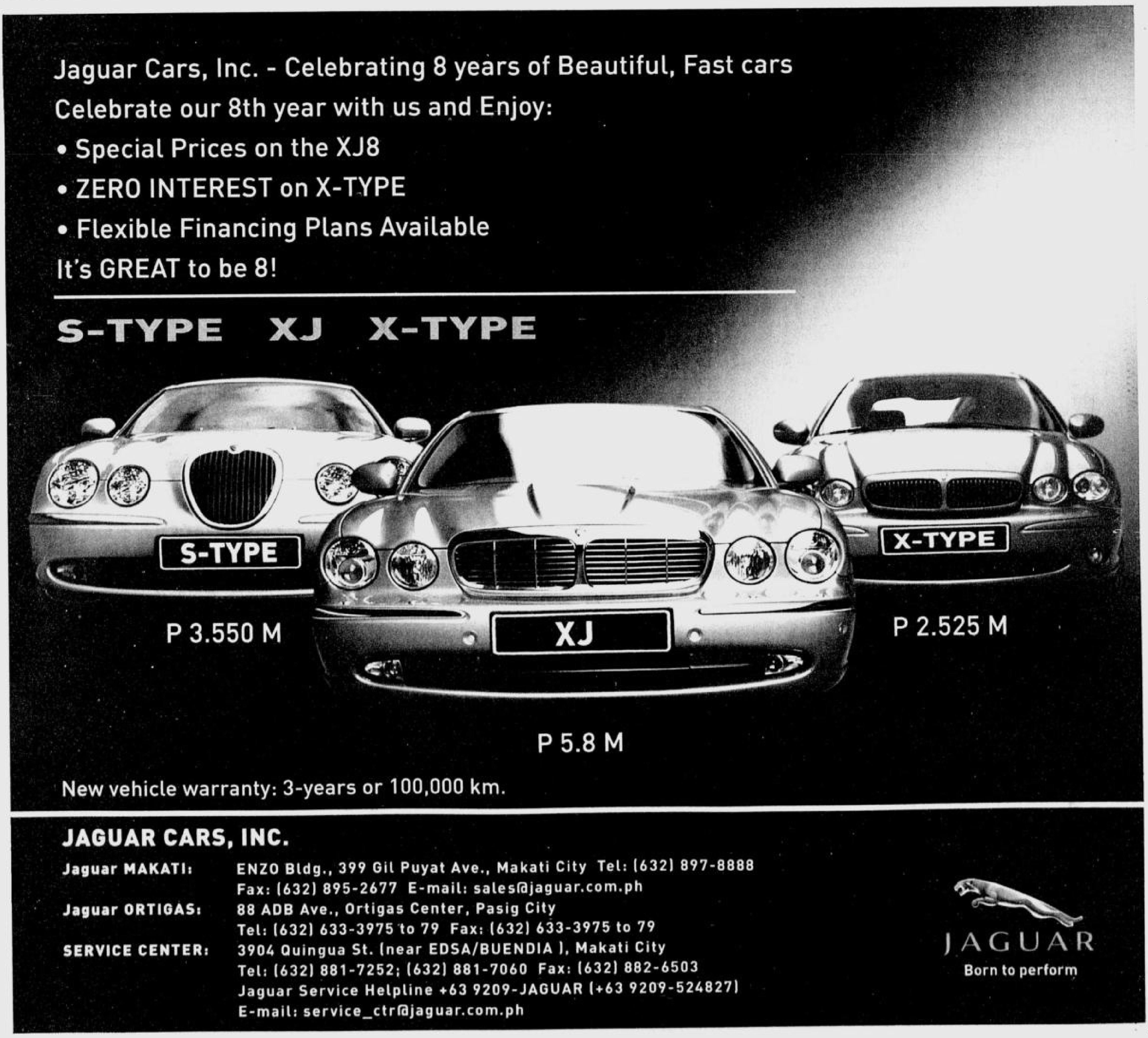
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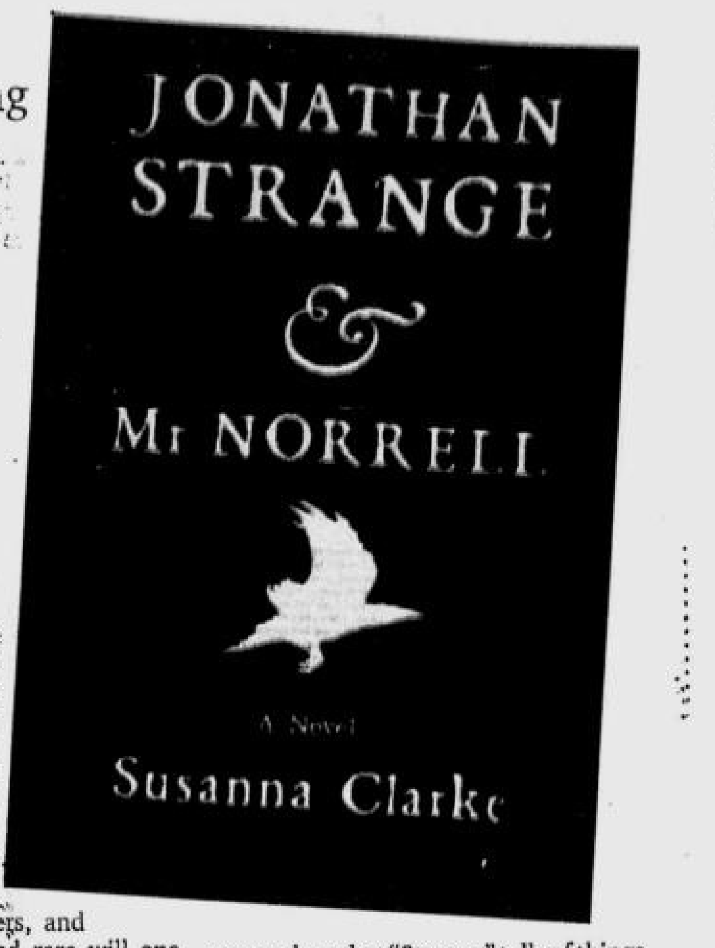
Born to perform

'Strange' love

By Ruel S. De Vera

A mesmerizing look at magicians, this book is a masterpiece of nerdy brilliance.



THEY are among the most fascinating and intimidating characters around. Merlin. Gandalf The Grey. Raistlin. Prospero. Harry Potter. They are magicians, conjurers of concept and curiosity, wizards with names as powerful as their origins in folklore, fable or fiction.

Because they provide a tantalizing combination of humanity and perceived divinity, these characters transcend the usual limitations of being a pawn on the page, in effect, tasting a bit of the immortal in the process—and in the reader's eyes.

Now, meet two new members of that powerful pantheon. Introducing Jonathan Strange and Gilbert Norrell, the titular protagonists/antagonists of first-time Brit novelist Susanna Clarke's massive, marvelous "Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrel" (Bloomsbury, London; 2004, 782 pages; with illustrations by Portia Rosenberg). Two people, as different as can be—one of them just as one would imagine a magician to be; the other, older gentleman, almost everything you think a magician shouldn't be. This unlikely love-hate, mentor-protégé relationship lies at the heart of "Strange," but also holds the future of English magic.

It is 1806, and England is searching for what little magic is left in the country ever since the fabled Raven King (a magic-using ruler of lore) left the English scene. Amid the studies of so-called theoretical magicians and the shenanigans of wily street magicians, an extremely secretive, bookish and unlikable man arrives together with his shadowy operative, Childermass. Displaying astounding feats of magic and forcing almost all others to give up their pursuits of magic, Gilbert Norrell is toasted by the public and moves up in society, effectively becoming the nation's authority on magic and adviser to its ministers.

But from nowhere, a seemingly aimless, wealthy young man begins to display an instinctive, precocious knowledge of things magical. Soon, Jonathan Strange is making a name for himself. Brash and adventurous, Strange soon comes to the attention of Norrell, who is delighted by the man who becomes Norrell's only pupil.

But all this happens in the first third of the 700-plus page "Strange," so readers know that all is not what it seems. Even as the two magicians begin to disagree, they are set of separate paths, with Norrell holing up in his huge library and Strange going to work for the government on the frontline of the war. But there is so much stirring behind the scenes that, when the two men finally part ways bitterly, they still seemed joined by their actions.

A fateful spell by Norrell to save a young woman's life leads to a terrible bargain with a dangerous fairy known only as the gentleman with the thistle-down hair, and that decision will affect virtually everyone else in "Strange." Why is Norrell buying all the magical books and hiding them away? What mysterious fate has befallen Strange's smart and beautiful wife Arabella? Are Norrell's henchmen Childermass, Lascelles and Drawlight up to good or ill? What has all this have to do with the wretched vagrant-magician known as Vinculus? And why does all this seem to have been foretold by a cryptic prophecy that involves not only the two magicians but also the legendary Raven King?

For the very first page, "Strange" is a challenging book, one that does not lend itself easily hurried reading. Not only is the first part full of explanatory elements and place-setting, but Clarke's prose is extremely dense and mannered, full of unique expressions and spelling. Yet the book is so crammed full of material that even the voluminous footnotes (some more than a page long) actually tell peripheral stories that are complete by themselves.

"Strange" requires patience at the beginning, because the many disparate elements, often wrapped in whole chapters, seem to fly off into all sorts of tangents.

But once the novel starts going, it seems to gain a life, a spirit all its own. Much is due to the complex, layered plot, but a lot also is due to Clarke's vivid, multi-faceted characters. At one point, all the characters seem like awful people, and at other times, utterly sensible, heroic sorts. Readers are bound to like some characters (or magicians) more than others, and that due to design. And rare will one find a menace as creepy and irresistible as the fairy gentleman. To great effect, Clarke shows how magic-far from the wand-and-word cliché, exists in a world of political maneuvering, human pettiness and nobility.

The rich, textured prose feels like a luxury and there is nothing about "Strange" that feels cut-rate. The expansive, epic novel rewards a reader's devotion with an enthralling, often dark yet always impressive adventure of intellect—and even unusual romance. As the novel marches to a sublime end, it becomes clear that "Strange" tells of things beyond magic—of treachery and evil, of devotion and love even as the eldritch prophecy begins to unravel around everybody, often with violence and homecomings of sorts. Journeying into truly unexpected territory, the book tells of the things unbound by spells and charms. And that is why readers must, at their first opportunity, take the time to get to know the extraordinary company of Susanna Clarke's astounding "Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell."

Available at Fully Booked

Romance and saga of the Nepomucenos

By Jose Victor Torres
Contributor

An oral history of a Pampanga entrepreneurial clan is a major contribution to local history

"A COFRADIA of Two" (Holy Angel University Press, 2004, 405 pages) by Erlita Mendoza is the fourth book published by the Holy Angel University Press that has, so far, done a good job in promoting Kapampangan history and culture here and abroad through the Juan D. Nepomuceno Center for Kapampangan Studies. It is also an addition to the impressive works that the center has published, such as its very interesting newsletter (Singsing) and its scholarly journal (Alaya).

"A Cofradia of Two" is not just an oral history of the Nepomuceno couple through the eyes of their children. It is also the story of the growth of Angeles, the first city of Pampanga.

The gist on the back cover can interest the reader about the uniqueness of this husband-and-wife team:

"No couple had been as different from each other as Juan and Teresa Nepomuceno were: He graduated summa cum laude, she never went beyond grade school; he was Jesuit-educated and a lawyer, she was a self-taught businesswoman. When they put up a business, he thought only of how it could serve God and community, while it was up to her to worry about the nuts and bolts, literally...

"Yet, together, they opened the first electric plant and first crystal ice plant of the region, the country's first Catholic school run by laypersons; a premier subdivision that reconfigured the city's layout and social strata, a commercial district that redefined the tastes of their *kabalen*, and a tiny soft-drinks factory that crossed swords with the nation's largest brewery..."

Oral testimonies taken from the Nepomucenos' eight surviving children and two of their daughters-in-law make up the main part of Mendoza's work. Through their words, the couple comes alive and gives us an understanding of the legacies they left behind in Angeles City.

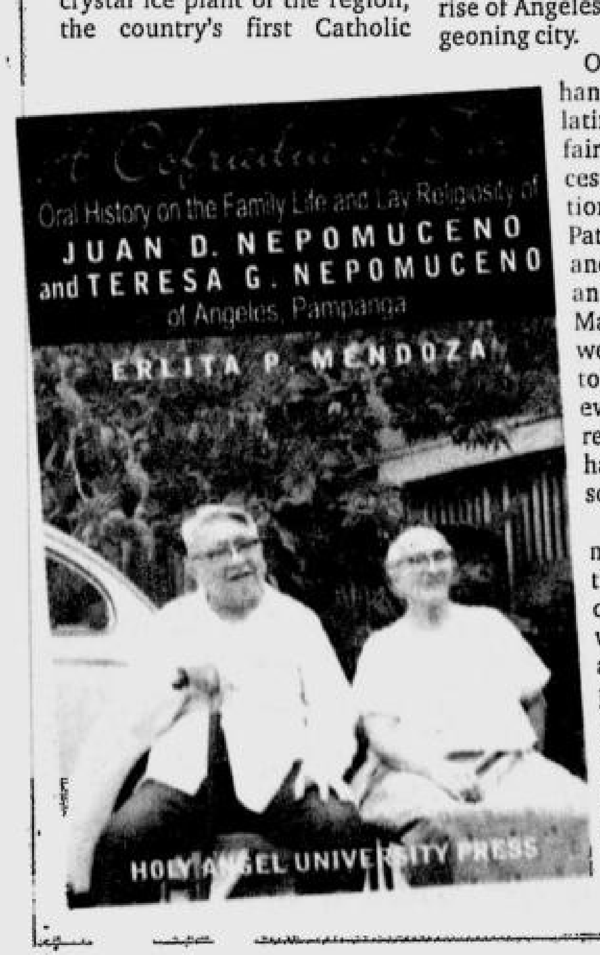
Adventure

Mendoza, a researcher of the University of Santo Tomas Center for Intercultural Studies, also tells the Nepomuceno story in an essay that is an adventure in words.

We learn from her of the trials and triumphs of the Nepomuceno family as they went through war, dabbled in politics, and put up businesses. The narrative not only tells a family's life, but also shows a clan that contributed much to the rise of Angeles town into a burgeoning city.

One fact Mendoza handled well in relating is the friar affair of Teresa's ancestors. The relationship between Patricia Mercado and the Augustinian friar, Guillermo Masnou, was a well-accepted fact to their townmates even though such a relation would have caused a scandal.

It must be remembered that the sexual affairs of the religious was a point of the anti-friar campaign by the Filipino propagandists like Rizal and Marcelo del Pilar. In this case, it seems the affair was no big deal for the Angeleños.



A characteristic of this book in which the reviewer was, at first, hesitant to point out, is its heavy reliance on oral history.

Facts from testimonies may add color to historical narratives, but it is not free from inaccuracies. There is also a danger of the historian being shortchanged on information. Memory can only serve so much. Mendoza should have backed up her oral research with data from primary sources.

Her essay is very informative about the family but the reader is left in the dark about the story's setting. A background on the socio-cultural, political and economic life of Angeles from its beginnings as a town to its growth as a city is needed.

Some questions are also left unanswered: Who were the other prominent citizens in Angeles and how did the Nepomucenos interact with them? Were business and political rivalries part of the town's life? Though these may be beyond Mendoza's scope of work, it is important that the reader is given an idea of the provincial backdrop. They will give an understanding of the context in which we can see the family's resilience in times of trial and success in times of conquest.

Mendoza's framework also relies on religiosity as part of her narrative. There seems to be too much of it in the book. One encounters too many religious references (including the title) that there is a danger that the Nepomucenos' story sounds too good to be true.

Nevertheless, "A Cofradia of Two" is an exemplary work of oral and local history. Learning about a place means knowing its history, places, events and personalities. In the case of Pampanga, Mendoza's book is a good source to know a part of that province's past.

"A Cofradia of Two" is available in Metro Manila at the Solidaridad Bookshop, Tradewinds, Lopez Museum and Filipinas Heritage Library; and in Angeles City, at the Holy Angel University's Kapampangan Center and the Orchids Bookstore.

6th UST national writers workshop now accepting applications

THE UST Center for Creative Writing and Studies is now accepting manuscripts for the Sixth UST National Writers Workshop to be held on April 17-23.

The workshop will focus on poetry, fiction and one-act play, in both English and Filipino. It is open to writers who have not been awarded fellowships to any national writers workshop.

An applicant should submit five hardcopies and a diskette copy (MS Word format) of his/her manuscript, one language per manuscript, containing at least five poems, or two short stories, or two one-act plays, a resumé, and 2x2 ID photo. Applicants should also enclose a certification duly signed by the head of his/her institution/company that the articles submitted are authentic and have not been copied from elsewhere.

Failure to meet all requirements will warrant automatic forfeiture of application.

There are 15 fellowships available, a percentage of which will be given to constituents of the Dominican Network of Schools, Colleges and Universities.

The deadline for submission is on March 15.

Successful applicants will be granted fellowships that will cover modest board and lodging. To conduct the workshop are Ophelia A. Dimalanta, National Artist F. Sionil Jose, Cirilo F. Bautista, and the associates of the CCWS.

Call 4061611 local 8281.

Young Cavite writers pay tribute to canonical regional writers

AS PART of the celebration of 2005 National Arts Month at De La Salle University-Dasmariñas, the members of Cavite Young Writers Association (CYWA) will read the works of prominent writers of the province from the 1896 Revolution up to the early 1960s.

Together with the launching of a video documentary on Cavite and DLSU-Dasmariñas Hymn by the Mass Communication classes of Annie Sarile, there will also be a presentation of Sining Kabitenyo by the DLSU-D Performing Arts Group at the university's Tanghalang Julian Felipe.

To be read are prose and poems by Diego Moxica, Carlos V. Ronquillo, Tomas Tirona and Lorenzo Paredes of the late 18th and early 19th centuries and pre-war and post-war works of writers Alejandro Abadilla, Teo S. Baylen, David Mamaril, Vic de la Cruz, Teo S. Buhain, Ambassador Ed Libid, Rogelio Ordoñez, Jimmuel Naval and Efren R. Abueg.

Readers from different Cavite schools will be: Ronald Verzo, president of CYWA; Alberto Masayon, Mark Anthony Ramos, Bienvenido Peralta, Flobby Carrasco, Leslie Anne Nuestro and Hazel Crisaldo; Lakbay Lahi; Stars of Cavite State University and Imus Institute Drama Theater Guild.

TextulaPinoy winners tackle the environment

A GRADUATING mathematics major of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines and a retired Filipino professor from the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila ruled the third week of TextulaPinoy, the poetry-writing contest through SMS technology of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts in observance of the 2005 National Arts Month.

The contrasting images in the proverbs of Noel Fortun and Gregorio Rodillo stood out from more than 6,000 entries that were texted in from all over the country.

Joel Costa Malabanan, Julie Anne Love Rola, Jess Ferrer, Edward Quintos, Mark Lester Rivera, Loi Landicho, Franz Barcelona, and Jose Perseus Canivel are consolation-prize winners.

National Artist Virgilio S. Almario, chair of the board of judges, was delighted that the winners were able to articulate specific environmental problems in their proverbs.

The winning entries:

Si Narsiso ay natakot
Nang mapatitig sa ilog
-Noel T. Fortun

Lunting puno, hanging lantay,
Purong tubig: simple'ng-buhay!
-Gregorio M. Rodillo

Alamid, dugong, bayakan
Aklat na lang ang tahanan.
-Joel Costa Malabanan

Pag bakawan ay sinira,
Walang tahanan ang isda.
-Julie Anne Love L. Rola

Sa bawat kinalbong gubat
Kasunod ay kalamidad.
-Jess Ferrer

Ang kalikasan ay ginto
Na minana sa ninuno.
-Edward F. Quintos

Bulag na pamahalaan
Balaraw sa kalikasan.
-Franz Barcelona

Bula ng sabon sa sapa
Salot sa tubig at isda.
-Loi Landicho

Ilog noo'y paliguan
Tila ngayo'y palikuran
-Mark Lester Rivera

Walang pansulsi sa ozong
Binutas ng CFCarbon
-Jose Perseus G. Canivel

Contestants must text in their entries along with their name and address to any of the following numbers: 09279245242 or 09279245243. Entries will be received anytime from Monday to Friday, but not later than 5 p.m. Friday. Judges will pick two winners (Text Makata ng Linggo) who will receive P5,000 each. Eight consolation prizes of P2,000 each will also be awarded. Call 9221830.

TextulaPinoy is sponsored by NCCA, in cooperation with the Filipinas Institute of Translation Inc., Globe Telecom, and the UP Institute of Creative Writing.

Indie films rule in National Arts Month

REMAINING true to its original mandate to nurture independent filmmaking, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), in cooperation with the Mowelfund Film Institute and the British Council, presents an assortment of do-it-yourself film works for the 12th edition of the annual "Pelikula at Lipunan."

On top of the list for the festival's indie cavalcade is Ditsi Carolino's "Bunso." The acclaimed documentary filmmaker leads us through a lurid yet engaging peek into the lives of three barely legal jailbirds who speak their truth about the harrowing life of being detained with hardened criminals in the justice system of the Philippines.

Turning to writing romance pulp, the former political firebrand Abe ponders his dissatisfaction and artistic angst in Mes De Guzman's "Diliman." A group of campus brats in Manila gets too involved with prostitution in the cyber world of "ec2luv" by Jowee Morel. Experimental buff Roque Lee a.k.a. Roxlee stalks his brother Romeo in art galleries and concert gigs to let people know why "Romeo Must Rock."

Raymond Red returns with two new shorts. "Salvaged Commercialism" is a whimsical medley of snippets from TV commercials. Melancholy demonstrates Red's cinematographic sense of magic with his Nokia camera cellphone.

Eric dela Cruz fools around with the possibilities that can and cannot transpire on a night in the life of a security guard on duty with his "Sekyu." Paolo Villaluna and Ellen Ramos' "Godspeed" is an essay on people's competitive ambitions.

The British Council in Manila presents 22 innovative animated shorts from the Best of British Animation Awards. Notable choices to watch out for are "Flatworld" by Daniel Greeves, "Intolerance" by Phil Mulloy and "Pleasures of War" by Ruth Lingford.

This year's holding of Pelikula at Lipunan is made possible by the NCCA Cinema Values Reorientation Program and the National Cinema Committee in cooperation with the Mowelfund Film Institute, SM Cinemas, Epson, Kodak, Greenwich, Ronald McDonald House Charities, Violett Films, LVN Pictures and the British Council in Manila.

Call 4104567, 7271915 or 0921-3398955.

FPJ gives Ng Meng Tam a plaque of appreciation for his donation of the Tama Ng screening room.

Children of Cathode Ray in multimedia performance

THE CHILDREN of Cathode Ray, an experimental sound-art group composed of video artist Tad Ermitaño and I.T. journalist Jing Garcia, will do a rare performance on March 1, 5 p.m. at the auditorium of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) in Intramuros, Manila.

This coincides with "Cinema Purgatoryo: Film in Transition," one of the events during the 2005 National Arts Month.

The event features multimedia installation and screenings of both mainstream and non-mainstream films with the objective of showcasing new ways of filmmaking brought by the convergence of technologies.

Cathode Ray has performed at several art houses as well as film and music festivals here and abroad. This will be their first performance this year.

Behringer pro-audio products and Creative E-MU professional soundcards support the Children of Cathode Ray's audio hardware equipment.

Pelikula at Lipunan . . .

From page D1

landmark films—"Anak ng Bulkan" (1959), "Walls of Hell" (1964), directed by Gerry de Leon and Eddie Romero, and "Santiago" (1970), directed by Lino Brocka.

The festival likewise introduces "Child-Friendly Cinema," featuring Maryo J. de los Reyes' prize-winning "Magnifico," plus values-oriented short films produced by the Mowelfund Film Institute, and a selection of award-winning British animated films courtesy of the British Council in Manila.

The festival was initially launched with Sine Ug Katilingban, a rousing tribute to Cebuano artists Gloria Sevilla, Mat Ranillo, Jr., Eugene Labella, Caridad Sanchez and Cesar Montano in SM City Cebu last Jan. 26-28.

The first Regional Film Congress in Mactan, Cebu, also gathered together filmmakers Kidlat Tahimik from Baguio, Peque Gallaga from Negros Occidental, Teng Mangansakan from Davao, and film groups Sine Ilonggo and the Southern Tagalog Exposure. The gathering came out with the Mactan declaration, which urges the regions to help shape the future of Philippine cinema.

This year's "Pelikula at Lipunan" is made possible by the NCCA Cinema Values Reorientation Program and the National Cinema Committee, in cooperation with the Mowelfund Film Institute, SM Cinemas and the provincial and city governments of Cebu.

WITH PAENG Nepomuceno

WITH Film Academy of the Philippines head Leo Martinez and Mowelfund head Boots Anson Roa

Bulacan revives Balagtasan

THE WOMEN of Malolos Foundation Inc. (WOMFI) will hold a Balagtasan to debate the issue "Sino ang higit na tumutugon sa mga katangian ng kadalagahang taga-Malolos na sinulatan ni Dr. Jose Rizal: ang dalaga kahapon o ang dalaga ngayon?"

District eliminations were held at 9 a.m. at the Doña C. Meneses High School in Bambang; Bocaue High School; San Miguel High School; and Meycauyan Bulacan High School.

The grand finals will be on Feb. 22 at the Provincial Capitol in Malolos City. Call 5229008.

SENATE President Franklin M. Drilon joins National Commission for Culture and the Arts executive director Cecile Guidote Alvarez in opening the "Cultural Heritage Sites" exhibit, featuring 26 Philippine churches and the four Baroque churches on the Unesco World Heritage List. The exhibit runs until Feb. 28, in connection with the 2005 National Arts Month (NAM). Others in photo are Sen. Edgardo Angara, Mila Drilon, Gloria Angara and Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia Villar. For info on NAM, log on to www.ncca.gov.ph.

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RP's best more appreciated by foreign audiences?

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

Filipino prize-winners are going on concert tours abroad but can hardly get to play in their country's national orchestra

COME typhoons, floods and tsunami, the country's most consistent ambassadors of goodwill remain our best talents in the performing arts.

Cecile Licad's first engagement this year, in January, in the Pro Musica season concert "French Impressions" at the Southern Theater in Colombus, Ohio, drew an ecstatic response. She played Ravel's Concerto in G .

Licad will be reunited with Joann Falletta (mentor of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra's Eugene Castillo), who will conduct the Virginia Symphony in Chopin No. 2, Feb. 26-27 at the Chrysler Hall, Norfolk.

With Falletta conducting the Buffalo Philharmonic, Licad will be soloist in Rach 3 April 2-3 at the Kleinhans Music Hall. By insistent public and critics' demand, Licad will open Madison Symphony's 78th season with Rach 3 under conductor John DeMain Sept. 20-21.

But Licad is not just a critic and audience favorite but also a favorite of co-artists. Piano goddess Martha Argerich called Licad the "greatest pianist of her generation."

After a Licad performance in Los Angeles, film celebrities Jody Foster and Joan Collins were so moved they had to go backstage to meet the Filipino pianist.

Other Licad showbiz admirers are actors Cesar Montano and Jaime Fabregas. Montano heard Licad in a special recital during the birthday of Marilou Diaz-Abaya. After watching a Bocelli concert at the Araneta Coliseum, the actor said, "There's still nothing like a Licad performance."

Licad also impressed her chamber music partner, and one of the world's best, German cellist Alban Gerhardt. He told music writer Tim Janof in an interview that, among the pianists he had worked with, his favorite was Licad.

Gerhardt said Licad was "a pianist who practically creates the pieces as she plays them. She studies the scores very carefully, but then she makes them her own and comes up with something new." He described one piece as "so beautiful that I got chills while playing it."

Meanwhile, baritone Noel Azcona, without doubt the most formidable discovery among the new batch of singers, will give a solo recital March 12 in St. Paul University Tuguegarao City. He will be joined by soprano Joan Cano and pianist Najib Ismail on March 27 at the Science City of Muñoz in Nueva Ecija. The concert is presented by the Muñoz Catholic Women's League in association with the office of Mayor Nestor Alvarez, probably the country's only town executive who can double as impresario.

For inquiries, call Music News at 09187376901.

Oliver Salonga, two-time winner in the National Music Competition of Young Artists (Namcya), won his second concerto competition in the United States with Liszt's Second Concerto (he first won in Rach 2). He performed Rach 2 in Sydney in January and instantly won fans in Australia.

He admitted he learned a lot from Licad's coaching in New York in September. As part of his prize, Salonga is now touring the United States with the school orchestra, playing his prize-winning concerto, Liszt No. 2.

Another genuine violin prodigy, Chino Gutierrez, is making waves in Munich, Germany not just as a promising violinist but as a Math wizard and public speaker. He memorized eight stanzas of a Goethe poem and delivered them in flawless German. He also came out first in a violin competition. He also won first place in a school "speechfest" in German!

Another Namcya winner, cellist Victor Michael Coo, who has just won in a concerto competition, performed in a festival as part of his prize. He is now on a US tour with a school orchestra.

Filipino prize winners are being showed off by schools abroad through nationwide concert tours but can hardly get to play in the Philippines' national orchestra unless they shell out at least P450,000 for a performance and two rehearsals.

It seems the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) resident impresarios cannot recruit talents except those supplied by Sinagtala Foundation for its Filipino Artists Series and the PPO season concerts. The foundation is headed by a member of the CCP board of trustees.

LICAD obliges autograph seekers.

JODIE Foster and Joan Collins (below) are among the Hollywood celebrities who called on Licad after her LA performance.

BARITONE Noel Azcona

Assumption stages musical

IN CELEBRATION of Mother Marie Eugenie Month and the awaited completion of its new theater, Assumption College is staging an original musical titled "3,999," with music by Von de Guzman.

It is a tribute to Marie Eugenie, founder of the Religious of the Assumption, the congregation that runs the Assumption schools.

Students, staff, teachers and other guest artists will be performing in the musical, under the direction of Ana Valdes-Lim.

Co-writing the music is Pinky Valdes, with lyrics by Carlos "Pido" Aguilar. Choreography is by Chito Miguel, and musical direction by Dennis Reyes and Felix Rivera.

The Assumption Voices, Assumption Community Theater, Danzmove with Chito Miguel, Don Bosco Mandaluyong and the Philippine Playhouse will also perform in the production.

"3,999" stands for the 4,000 letters that Marie Eugenie and Father D'Alzon wrote to each other. The letters are a witness to Marie Eugenie's strength, vision and humanity.

"We hope '3,999' will spread Marie Eugenie's spirit in the hearts of young and old as they witness her wit and candor through beautiful music and dance numbers," says Valdes Lim.

The show runs March 11-12, 7:30 p.m., at the college gym. Tickets are at P200. Call 8942661.

CAST members of Assumption College's new musical, "3,999"

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